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THE
BAPTIZED
FAMILY.

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THE
BAPTIZED FAMILY;
OR, AN INQUIRY INTO
THE CONDITION OF CHILDREN
IN
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

BY CÆSAR MALAN, D.D.,
OF GENEVA.

Translated from the French
BY M. J. MULLIGAN.

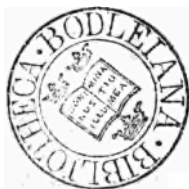
With a Recommendatory Preface
BY THE REV. R. J. BRYCE, LL.D.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THERE has lately appeared a work against the baptism of the infant children of Christians. It is in the form of a dialogue; and the interlocutors are *Samuel* and *James*. The former, who disapproves of such baptism, sustains his objections to it by the following arguments:—

1st. *The danger of infant baptism*, inasmuch as it becomes, in many instances, a hindrance to conversion.

2nd. The baptism of water does not confer any grace on the children of Christians, since they stand in the same relation to God as the children of the heathen.

3rd. Baptism has ~~not~~ replaced the Jewish ordinance of circumcision.

4th. The baptism of water, which is the external sign of the baptism of fire, or the Holy Spirit, belongs only to the spiritual church—viz., only to believers.

These arguments, which are stated with calmness and devout feeling, receive but feeble replies from *James*. The reader may consequently be led to infer that *Samuel* is in the right, since his opponent has so little to say in opposition to his views.

The object of the following dialogue is to supply what *James* either could not or would not say to his friend. It will, therefore, contain an examination of *Samuel's* arguments; and this will require considerably more time than is occupied by him in bringing them forward. For it is with certain opinions, as with those subtle and powerful odours which cannot be removed from a garment without great trouble. Thus the Apostle Paul was obliged to write a long epistle, to check merely a few errors of certain Christians among the Hebrews.

However, this subject is important, for it is connected with the fundamental principles of our faith, and, therefore, demands the attention and study of every disciple of the truth. But, as it is one of those questions that cause so much unhappy disunion amongst those who are redeemed by the same Saviour, it ought to be treated with prudence, and in the spirit of love, lest controversy, should assume the place of discussion, and become more injurious to peace than useful to the faith.

PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION.

BY THE REV. R. J. BRYCE, LL.D.

SOME years ago, an amiable and highly gifted youth, whose parents, both Baptists, were among my dearest friends, left home, in delicate health, in the Autumn, with the intention of passing the Winter in Italy. He was accompanied by another invalid, an old school-fellow, to whom he was much attached; but, on reaching Geneva, the latter, I forget why, gave up the idea of Italy, and set off in another direction; so my young friend, shrinking from the alternative of four or five solitary months in a land of strangers, lingered at the foot of the Alps for a few weeks, and then returned home. His bodily health was not improved, but his soul had "passed from death unto life."

He had been religiously brought up—diligently instructed in Christian doctrine, and carefully trained in the practice of Christian virtue. This education had produced its natural results; and nothing was wanting but that which is beyond the sphere of natural causes.

His understanding, originally fine and now highly cultivated, had cordially assented to all the truths of revelation; while his moral sentiments were sound, and his conduct irreproachable. He was haunted by no scepticism, and had fallen into no vice; but he had not been born again: that great change awaited him at Geneva.

He had a letter of introduction to Cæsar Malan; and, as soon as he could after his arrival, he went to present it. He was most kindly received, and most cordially invited to return. One or two visits more placed him on a footing of intimacy with his new friend, to enjoy whose society and attend on whose ministry it was that he prolonged his stay in Geneva. In short, it pleased God, by the conversation and preaching of Dr. Malan, to carry home to the heart and conscience of this young man, the truths which, till then, had penetrated no deeper than the understanding, and to teach him the great secret of laying hold on Christ as *his own Saviour*. It is thus that He who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, manifests His sovereignty in the choice of the means by which He brings His elect to Himself, and vindicates His own claim to all the glory of the work. It was not for lack of Christian conversation and evangelical preaching at home, that this youth was sent all the way to Geneva, to be converted to God.

Nor did the mother of my young friend (now his only surviving parent), grudge or envy the Swiss pastor the honour of having been the instrument of her son's

saving change. On the contrary, her heart overflowed with joy and thankfulness, not only for the happy event itself, but also for having been shown so strikingly that it was God's doing, and guarded so effectually from giving any part of the glory to any other.

When the young man was preparing to return home, Dr. Malan presented him with the original of the following tract; and, when his sufferings came to an end, his mother gave it to me. I read it with great interest, especially the earlier portion of it, in which an important part of the argument is presented in almost the same shape it had taken, some years before, in my own mind, when reflection and study of the Scriptures solved some doubts I had been led to feel about the lawfulness of Infant Baptism. I naturally wished to have it published in English, and prevailed on a lady, belonging to my congregation, to undertake the translation of it. She had proceeded a good way, when circumstances occurred which rendered it necessary to suspend the work, and it lay by for several years, principally from want of leisure, on my part, to read the original a second time, and with a more critical eye. But a conversation which I had with a friend in Scotland, in the end of 1857, or the beginning of 1858, recalled my attention to the matter so strongly, that I put aside other occupations for a little, re-examined certain passages, in which the correctness of the author's views had been questioned, and came to the conclusion

that there was nothing substantially amiss in them, though the mode of expression might be objectionable; and that it would be wrong, on so slight grounds, to withhold so valuable a production from the English public. So I requested Miss Mulligan to proceed with her work, believing that misconceptions would be easily guarded against by two or three short notes, and by omitting here and there an equivocal expression, or inserting a parenthetical explanation. At the same time, when I did not think an inaccuracy likely to mislead the reader seriously, I took no notice of it. The book is Dr. Malan's, not mine, and I did not feel at liberty to make any material alterations, nor to trouble the reader with minute criticism on what was not material.

The great merit of Malan's tract lies in the fulness and graphic power with which it brings out the Scriptural truth, that the children of believers belong by covenant to God. On this principle the whole doctrine of Infant Baptism rests; and all attempts to find for it any other foundation, or to regulate the practice of it by any other view, leads either to a delusive superstition on the one hand, or a deadening formalism or mischievous latitudinarianism, on the other. In handling the other points of the argument, Dr. Malan may be equalled or surpassed by other writers; but in this, so far as my reading extends, he is unrivalled. This is, perhaps, in some measure due to his having adopted the form of a dialogue: that species of composition is much

better fitted for exhibiting the characters and feelings of human beings, and the nature of the relations which they occupy toward one another, than for handling abstract truths.

The great objection to dialogue, as a vehicle of controversy, is, that it is scarcely possible for the writer to give full force to the arguments of those to whose views he is opposed. Dr. Malan complains of this, as a fault in the dialogue to which his is a reply; and the same complaint has been made against himself, by some friends of mine, inclined to Baptist views, who have read either the original itself, or the manuscript of this translation. This, however, is almost inseparable from this form of composition. When a man honestly and sincerely holds an erroneous opinion, he will naturally present the arguments in its favour with their garniture of fallacies, arranged in the manner which is best fitted to conceal their inconclusiveness, and which actually does conceal it from his own mind. But when the same arguments are stated by one who sees their unsoundness, it is not easy for him to express himself as if he did not see it: he has torn to pieces the drapery of error, and it is not easy for him to replace it, so that the rents shall not appear. Dr. Malan, however, tells us, in his preface, that this dialogue is not a fiction. By this he probably means that a discussion, substantially the same as that given in the following pages, and issuing in a similar result, actually took place between

himself and a Baptist friend. Of this the tract contains internal evidence; and I know that when my young friend went to Dr. Malan's house, with his letter of introduction, he read, over the door, the inscription* from Joshua, xxiv. 15, which is represented as having so forcibly struck Samuel, and was affected by it in the very same manner. He felt deeply the vividness with which it brought forward religion among the substantial realities of life, and wondered at the confidence with which the head of the family answered for his household. These impressions were the germ of his conversion.

Of the translation I will only say, that having carefully compared it with the original, I can answer for its fidelity, and for the felicity with which it brings out in English many subtleties of French idiom. How far it has attained the other requisites of a translation, every reader can judge for himself.

* It is a usual practice among the upper and middle classes in Switzerland to have inscriptions on the walls of their houses, and in their grounds, expressing sentiments which they admire, or commemorating persons and events that interest them. These inscriptions, of course, indicate the prevailing feeling in the mind of the person by whom they are set up; and about the dwellings of religious people, they have a religious character. There was, therefore, no singularity or affectation in such a motto.

RECOMMENDATORY NOTICE.

BY THE REV. DR. HOUSTON, KNOCKBRACKEN

SOME years ago, I read a work of Dr. Malan, of Geneva, on Baptism, arranged in the form of a dialogue between a Pædo-Baptist and one who denies the doctrine of Infant Baptism. At the time I was much pleased with the simple, striking, and conclusive manner in which the argument was presented in favour of the infant seed of believers being included in the covenant of redemption, and so entitled to its visible seal,—with the originality and clearness of various Scripture criticisms and expositions contained in the work,—and with the concise and very satisfactory statement of the benefits resulting from Infant Baptism.

The following translation of Dr. Malan's work, by an esteemed Lady in Belfast, I have perused in manuscript with much pleasure. It is at once exact, and free, presenting the sense of the original in a perspicuous and fluent English style, and doing ample justice to the argument of the author. I regard the publication of this little work as eminently seasonable at present, it being specially adapted for general readers by its lively and popular style, and by the powerful manner in which, while the argument is strictly logical, it appeals to the best and highest feelings of Christian parents.

I therefore freely give it my warmest recommendation.

THOMAS HOUSTON.

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THE BAPTIZED FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHILD DEVOTED TO GOD.

SAMUEL had just parted with his friend James, after having, as he thought, demonstrated to him that the children of Christians do not possess any advantage over those of the heathen, and that, consequently, they ought not to be sealed with the name of the Almighty.

James, a simple-hearted and pious man, but himself as yet a "babe in Christ," had met the *dicta* of Samuel with only a few feeble observations; and the latter, all the more firmly convinced of the correctness of his own views, in taking leave, had prayed that God would reveal to his friend the whole truth of His Word.

But might we not suppose that, in this case, we have a verification of the text which says—"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him." (Prov. xviii. 17.) Am I going too far, when I ask permission to apply to Samuel, the friend of James, what follows?—which, moreover, is not a fiction.

Well: Samuel was obliged to take a journey; and, amongst the pious people whom he visited, there was one of his friends, a man of some information, and the father of a numerous family. This friend resided in the

country, and Samuel, desirous of having a long conversation with this brother, called on him in the morning.

"This, then," said he, as he approached the Christian's dwelling, "is one of the houses in which the Saviour is loved! May the Prince of Peace multiply peace on it, and on all the children of peace that live in it!" Full of this pleasing sentiment, he advanced towards the house, on the doors and walls of which he could read the same wish that his own heart had formed; for different passages of Scripture were inscribed upon them in several places, and above the principal entrance might be read the following words—"AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD." (Joshua xxiv. 15.) Samuel stopped before this inscription, which he read more than once, dwelling on the words *and my house*; then he knocked, that the door of his brother might be opened to him.

He was received by a young girl. "Papa and mamma," said she to him, "are out walking; but they will soon return." "I will wait for them," said Samuel; "and, in the meantime, if you please, I will again read those beautiful passages of God's Word that I see written on your house."

"It was our good papa," said the girl, while accompanying him, "who wrote them himself: and as my brothers, sisters, and I were all around him when he did it, he prayed our God to write them on our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

"And do you believe that God has already done so?" said Samuel, stopping to converse with the girl.

Girl—We at least hope that He will do so; for our God is also our good Father, and He has already greatly blessed the elder members of our family.

Samuel—Do you then believe, my dear girl, that He is your God ?

Girl (with surprise)—Oh, surely, Sir ! Is He not papa and mamma's God ? Of course He is our God, also !

This reply touched Samuel, for the child had made it with all her heart, and the tone of her voice had indicated the profoundest conviction. Accordingly, although the declaration was not in accordance with his own opinions, he did not venture to oppose it. She had inspired him with respect, and he felt that any attempt on his part to deprive her of this belief would be a very culpable act—to a certain extent a seduction.

It would, therefore, have been impossible for him to repeat to her what he had affirmed with so much confidence to his friend James—viz., "That the children of believers stood on no other footing before God than those of heathens." His conscience seemed to tell him that this was not absolutely true, at least in the family he was now visiting, and the child's other replies only tended to make him feel this more and more.

Samuel—How old are you, my dear ?

Girl—A little more than ten years. I have two brothers and three sisters older than myself, and two brothers and two sisters younger. My dear little sister is not yet one year old.

Samuel—And do you think that God is also the God of that little sister ?

Girl—Oh ! yes, yes, Sir ; for our family is not like the poor heathens that the missionaries visit. They are only idolaters, and their children are dedicated to their false gods ; but papa and mamma are Christians, and we have been dedicated to the Lord Jesus. For you know, do you not, that the Lord Jesus loves little

children, and that He blesses them? Mamma says we are His lambs, and that one day, when we grow larger, and so know Him better, we shall be His sheep.

Samuel was now becoming more and more thoughtful. The simple and sweet confidence of the young girl interested him deeply; and, as he felt unwilling to make any reply to this so very simple and touching expression of her piety, his questions were henceforth prompted merely by his desire to know the extent of this young disciple's faith.

Samuel—Nevertheless, my dear child, your little sister does not yet know that there is a God, and that He has condescended to visit us.

Girl (with an expression of pity)—But, Sir, do you not know that "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights." (James i. 17.) This is quite true, Sir, because it is St. James who says it. You see, then, that it is God who, in His great goodness, has made Himself our God. We did not create ourselves in a country where His Holy Bible is known, nor did we seek Him first; but it was He that gave us a papa and mamma, who are His children. You now see, Sir, that God has made Himself our God. My little sister also, when she becomes larger, will understand this quite as well as I do.

Samuel—You think, then, that God knows you, and that He takes care of you as of one of His own children?

Girl—Oh, Sir, I am quite sure of it. Papa has shown me in the Holy Bible, that God called the sons and daughters of the Israelites "His children" (Ezek. xvi. 20, 21); and you know that we are not in a worse condition than the children of the Jews.

Samuel—But, dear child, you know that the Jews were a peculiar people—holy to the Lord.

Girl—And we also are holy to the Lord ; for we have all, as you know, His great name upon us. We have all been baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and papa very often reminds us of this at morning prayer ; mamma, too, during the day, often exhorts us to think of it, that we may be good children.

Samuel—How so, dear child ?

Girl—Oh, it is that, since we are consecrated to God, by His great name, which is put upon us, we ought to be mindful of it, and so respect it. For instance, the other day I was so unfortunate as to get out of temper with my little brother. Well, mamma called me to her and asked me if the gardener used papa's silver gilt cup, to draw water from the sewer, when he was watering the vegetables. I said to mamma that he did not, because that cup was too precious for such a use ; and besides, it had papa's name and a text from the Bible engraven on it. Mamma then asked me if I, who had been marked with God's name, and who was for that reason as a holy vessel in His sight, ought to be filled with the foul and loathsome waters of pride and passion ; and I assure you, Sir, that I understood mamma's meaning very well, and shall not, please God, ever get out of temper again.

Samuel became still more thoughtful. The child's last words had penetrated to his very heart, in which there arose, as it were, a voice in favour of what he had just seen and heard, and he desired the return of her parents, that he might put questions to them, and give replies which he felt reluctant to bring before the mind of a child.

CHAPTER II.

ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY IS THE CHARACTER OF THE WHOLE
COVENANT OF GOD.

"WE have heard, with very great pleasure, as we wrote you, of the happy birth of your first-born," said the father of the family to Samuel, when they were alone together, "and have rendered thanks for it to the Lord, whose holy name is named upon him."

Samuel blushed; and it was not without some embarrassment that he was obliged to confess that his child was not yet baptized.

Father—Is it possible, my friend? It is, however, more than three months since he was born. Is it possible that you have the misfortune of being a Baptist?

Samuel—The misfortune, do you say!

Father—Certainly; and the great misfortune, too, which it undoubtedly is, to remove oneself, though it were but by ignorance, from the Word and grace of God.

Samuel—Well, I assure you that I don't think that on this point I am ignorant of God's will. I believe that I act in conformity to it, when I withhold from my child a baptism to which he has not got any right.

Father—Dear Samuel, I was not aware of this change in your opinions, and I am grieved by it. But, tell me, are you as sure of what you advance as I am of its contrary? For in short, brother, one of us must be in formal opposition to the will of God, which does not, in any case, admit of a double interpretation; and which,

assuredly, does not leave one of the ordinances of the Church at the mercy of man's opinion. Now, as regards myself, I am as certain of having obeyed the holy will of my God, in naming, with the sign of baptism, His great name upon my children, as I am of having Him for my own God.

Samuel—I understand how, with such views, you must be scandalized with my conduct.

Father—Scandalized! By no means, dear friend; but I am afflicted on your account, and lament that you have fallen into this error.

Samuel—But, beloved brother, am I in error when I do what I believe to be the truth—the very Word of God? Is not my conscience in this sincere?

Father—Sincere! I have no doubt it is. But is it enlightened? and are you not mistaken as to the meaning of that Word, when you exclude your own child from the promise to which you his father have attained; and, by so doing exclude him likewise from the Church of Christ, to which you belong? In what part of God's Word are you commanded thus to deprive your offspring of the privileges and blessings which He assigns to them?

Samuel—God preserve me from doing such a thing! I have not, however, done anything like that in withholding from my child a ceremony, of whose signification or even existence he cannot possibly know anything.

Father—Call not that a ceremony, dear Samuel, which is an ordinance of God.

Samuel—Be assured, dear friend, that I do not apply this term to the baptism of water, except with regard to little children. To them it is in reality but a ceremony, since they are not in any way capable of deriving benefit from it.

Father—Capable! did you say? Ah, brother! when it is Sovereign Majesty that acts, who, I pray you, is capable of His grace, but any being whatever who is the object of it?

Samuel—But still it is necessary, is it not, that this being should be aware of the operation of this grace towards himself? Now, how can this happen in the case of a little child?

Father—Well, when the sovereignty of power or of grace acts, it neither demands of the creature who is the object of it, that he should will nor that he should feel. The supreme authority is sufficient of itself; and what it has done is effectual, from the very fact that it has done it.

Samuel—Is this principle well founded, my friend?

Father—Judge of it yourself by the following anecdote. In one of the West Indian Islands, a planter, a God-fearing man, resolved to bestow liberty on all the children of a family of slaves that lived on one of his estates, at a distance from his residence. For this purpose, he sent a messenger with orders to inform the family that they were free, and to place on the neck of each of the children a blue collar, which should be at once a sign of liberty to them, and an appeal to the humanity of the other planters. The messenger could not reach the village until a late hour of the night. He presented himself, and laid before the parents his auspicious mission. They showed him four children (one of whom was still unweaned and feeble), who had gone to rest for the night. "Let us not awake these dear little creatures," said the messenger, who was a tender-hearted, pious man. "The liberty which I bring them is theirs, although they are yet

ignorant of it, and the collars which they are henceforth to wear, will recall it to their minds every day, although they do not even know that my master is sending it to them." So saying, he passed on, and adroitly attached a collar to the neck of each, even to that of the little suckling; and after having, for some moments, and with the kindest feelings, looked upon those four little ones, who had gone to sleep slaves, but were to awake for ever free, he invoked on them the blessing of the Lord Jesus, and immediately departed, that he might carry to his master an account of the gratitude of the parents, and, at the same time, express to him his own delight.

Samuel—How touching this story, dear friend! How solemn and at the same time how affecting this scene!

Father—You perceive, however, Samuel, that these infants felt not, willed not, nay, did not even know what their master and benefactor was doing for them; and yet their total ignorance did not render his gift less efficacious, or prevent the collars, which they so unwittingly received, from being the sure sign of their liberty—the visible and significant mark, which separated them from other children still in slavery.

Samuel—I understand your meaning; you wish me to observe, don't you, that these children were capable of receiving this favour, seeing that the bestowing of it depended entirely on the good pleasure of their master?

Father—And was it not so in reality? Now, if the good pleasure and authority of a man were sufficient to impart a benefit, even to those who were incapable of knowing or comprehending it, how much more must the sovereign pleasure and infinite power of the Almighty be sufficient to communicate to His creatures, grace,

or any dispensation whatever, that He may design for them?

Samuel—I understand your idea, and have perhaps really deceived myself in my estimation of the power which belongs to the ordinance of God.

Father—You have certainly done so, brother; for see what one of these ordinances of the Lord was amongst the Israelites. Circumcision, without doubt, signified something, and was assuredly the seal appointed, not by man but by God, of a covenant entered into by Him with certain families in this world. But this seal was placed upon children newly born, and, by that very circumstance, incapable of knowing even of its existence.

Samuel—I understand; circumcision, you say, was not the less valid on that account.

Father—Certainly; for it was the appointment of God's supreme authority that gave it validity.

Samuel—And you think that the child entered thus into covenant with God?

Father—He was in covenant with God even before he received this sign, and circumcision was merely an indication of this—an outward mark of it impressed upon the child. Recollect the terms in which Moses spoke of this covenant to the Israelites (Deut. xxix. 10–15—“Ye stand this day all of you, before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, &c.: that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to

Isaac and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day." It was, therefore, with regard to children yet unborn, as well as to the then present generation, that not only was the covenant entered into, but even the sanction of the oath enjoined. Where in this case was their *capability*, if I may use that word?

Samuel—I acknowledge that the capability was only in the sovereignty of the divine appointment, and I perceive that I have after all, spoken too lightly of baptism, since the question is not to demand of what utility it may be to the infant, but carefully to inquire whether the Lord appoints it for him or not.

Father—That is the correct statement of the question; for it depends on the principle that under the kingdom of *grace* the creature does not *choose* nor *accept*,* but *receives* everything, because everything is ordained by an exercise of sovereignty on the part of Him that worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

* See note A at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER III.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ERROR OF THE BAPTIST SYSTEM IS THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ACT OF MAN'S WILL INTO THAT WHICH OUGHT ONLY TO BE REGARDED AS THE SOVEREIGN APPOINTMENT OF GOD.

Samuel—Do you really mean to say that the ordinance of baptism is entirely independent of the choice and consent of the person who receives it?

Father—I repeat to you that I believe every ordinance of God to be supremely independent, whether of the approbation or the contempt of man; therefore in the matter which now occupies us, and which unfortunately adds to the divisions that distract the Church of God, it seems to me that the question at issue is much less that of infant baptism, than of the place which the child, under the Gospel, occupies amongst God's people, and of the character which God assigns to it.

My meaning is this:—Baptism with water is the sign of a purpose of God towards man; and man, in order to receive this sign, ought to stand in a certain position which God has specified; therefore, if even an infant be found in this position, it is evident that the sign ought to be put on him.

Samuel—That is to say, is it not, that you consider baptism as a seal which God, by His sovereign authority, puts on a human being, and not as a mark to which the human being first approaches, and which He accepts?

Father—Once more, brother, in the kingdom of grace

man accepts * nothing, and I think that what you have just said is the root of the error in which I believe you to be. You act on the supposition that there is *independence* on the part of man; that he comes, as it were, to meet this ordinance, with which he complies, and which he accepts. And here lies, I think, that which discovers to the eye of faith the faultiness of this way of acting.

Samuel—In what, pray?

Father—In this, that man, in doing so, changes into an act of his own will that which is entirely an appointment of God's authority; and, by this wrong step, withdraws from the kingdom of grace to enter upon the labour of works; *acts*, where he ought only to *receive*; *does* instead of letting God do for him—viz., appropriates, in some respects, under the name of obedience, a work which is exclusively that of God toward him, and not at all that of consent and agreement on his part.

Samuel—Pardon me, dear brother, if I say that I find it very difficult to understand your observation.

Father—My meaning is this. If God had said to man *thou shalt get thyself baptized*, baptism would have been an active duty; such as, for example, the sanctification of the Sabbath; but as God has said *be thou baptized*, the duty which he imposes is a passive one.

Samuel—I understand your idea. You consider baptism, in some degree, like the anointing oil that was put on the vessels of the sanctuary, but which the vessels did not accept.

Father—Precisely. For though the utensils that God had caused to be sealed by the anointing oil were only of a metal similar to that of any other vessel, yet what

* See note A, at the end of the volume.

a character did not this *divine appointment* impress on them! Why could not the Levites approach them? and why must they have died had they dared to touch them? Why those lamentations over the profane use which impious kings made of them? (Num. xviii. 3); and why, also, the complaint of David over the shield of Saul, abandoned on Gilboah, as if it had not been anointed with the holy oil? It was, you see, because God, by His sovereign will, had set them apart, and they were holy, how unconscious soever they may have been of that dedication. It was the same of circumcision; and, in the present day, it is the same with regard to baptism; moreover, as circumcision, a passive sacrament, was distinct from the passover, an active duty; so, under the Gospel, one of God's ordinances is a passive seal, the other an active duty.

Samuel—This distinction, which is quite new to me, appears worthy of attention. Have the goodness to state it more fully.

Father—Well, then, pay attention, first, to the terms employed in these ordinances. The first is instituted by this command, *go and baptize*; and is fulfilled in these words, *be baptized*, or *I baptize thee*; as I have baptized Crispus. (Acts ii. 38; 1 Cor. i. 14.) Or else, when the disciple sees the necessity of it for himself, he says—"What doth hinder me to be baptized?" and the reply is not, "do so," but "thou mayest (be baptized);" expressions which all indicate that the question here is of a mark received, and not of a work in which man's will and acquiescence perform anything. But the ordinance of the Lord's Supper bears a totally different character. Its institution is in these words—"Take, eat: do this in remembrance of me;" and its celebration

is preceded by an examination, by personal and very searching trial of the disciple, who will celebrate it unworthily if he does not act according to knowledge, conforming, at the same time, the whole of his will to that of the Lord.

Samuel—Permit me to state something that strikes me, dear brother. This examination, this trial of his faith, is what the Christian ought to make before partaking of the Lord's Supper; but to this he is certainly not called in any part of the written Word when baptism is in question. Yes; this certainly does make a difference.

Father—This difference is positive. In the Lord's Supper, faith examines itself; then it acts with reflection, with choice, and with preference. In the case of baptism, nothing like this is either commanded or indicated in God's Word, and therefore to the question, why those who baptize their children do not also administer to them the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, the reply is quite simple, and Scripture furnishes it by saying that baptism is a seal imposed by God, whilst the Lord's Supper pre-supposes self-examination on the part of the communicant. Now, an infant is susceptible of receiving a seal placed upon him by God, but is not yet capable of self-examination; therefore he can be baptized, though he cannot partake of the Lord's Supper.

Samuel—This explanation is very clear, and satisfies me entirely.

Father—It may also show you the impropriety of that examination and preparation that Baptists are in the habit of requiring from the disciples whom they baptize. It is certain that Scripture not only neither commands nor sets the example of such examination and prepara-

tion, but, moreover, that it does not even suggest them. Nay, it rather opposes them; for if, with regard to the Lord's Supper, it requires faith, and consequently an act of the will, it speaks of baptism as of an ordinance having all its power in sovereign authority. It is, therefore, like a seal—like the fiscal stamp which an officer puts on gold or silver, to mark it, on behalf of him who possesses the right to do so.

Samuel—Do you mean by this that the converted adult, who is baptized, is not to give any attention to this ordinance—that he is only to submit to it, so to speak, like a stone?

Father—Certainly not; for the adult heathen or Jew, who has received from God faith in the name of the Lord Jesus, receives also by the Word the command to be baptized. It is therefore his duty, in compliance with this command, which he believes, gratefully to receive on himself the seal with which God deigns to mark him. But reverently to thank God, because He consecrates me by the seal of His name, which He Himself puts upon me, is very different from imagining that my own inclinations and preparations render me more fit for it, and give more of reality and efficacy to its impress.

Samuel—Now I understand you. You would have the adult disciple, though he knows what God does for him, to be as passive in this ordinance as the little child.

Father—That is my idea, and I consider those preparations and inclinations of the Baptists, what those of a gold object would be, which believed itself better stamped, because it was persuaded that the die had marked it. It is certain that this persuasion would

neither be the impress of the die, nor the blow of the hammer that fixed it.

Samuel—Do you, then, still return to the sovereign authority of God, and attribute to it entirely the ordinance of baptism?

Father—Yes, dear brother, entirely ; and if I dwell so much upon it, it is because I am persuaded that in this lies the fundamental and principal error of the Baptist. He changes the passive duty to which God's authority subjects the man who receives the ordinance into an active duty of faith. Think of the blue collars of the little negroes.

Samuel—I confess to you that I never before imagined that the ordinance of baptism was so serious and important as you now show me that it is.

Father—It is connected with the fundamental doctrines of our faith. According to these doctrines, the man that mingles, in any way whatever, his own works and inclinations with the grace of God, disowns it, dishonours it, and keeps himself apart from it. In like manner, I think that to change, even in some respects only, a divine ordinance into an active duty, on the part of man, is to disown the majesty of the former, and to thrust away the benefit to be derived from it. Such a proceeding is, in my opinion, a species of insolence towards the Most High in this, that it, at the least, mixes up the choice and acquiescence of the creature with the sovereign authority and sublime independence of the divine ordinance.

Samuel—Are you not going too far, my friend? are you not unjust towards this work of obedience, and could it cause so much joy, and so many happy effects in the soul, were it thus faulty?

Father—My dear brother, it is easy to believe ourselves *blessed* when we are only *self-satisfied*. The ordinary language of God's people is to say, *how I have been blessed!* when they ought simply to say, *how much satisfaction have I derived from what I have done!* The superstitious man says that he is blessed in his austerities and vain observances, for his imagination occupies the place of faith, and his own self-approbation seems to him to be the Spirit of God. It is but too much the same amongst the disciples of the truth, as those Christians who, after having been Baptists, have returned from that persuasion, will tell you. They believed themselves blessed, and that abundantly, when they got themselves baptized; spoke of the happiness of their minds, and of all the benefits that they had derived from the ordinance. Afterwards, when their illusion was dispelled, and when they returned to the simplicity of the faith, they concluded, and with justice, that these emotions proceeded neither from God nor from His Spirit, but simply from their own impressions, or the influence of those by whom they were surrounded.

Samuel—I feel assured, however, that such is not my case, and that, on the contrary, I can render a Scriptural reason for what I have done, whether in getting myself re-baptized, or in withholding the ordinance of baptism from my child.

Father—Well, then, will you tell me why you got yourself re-baptized?

Samuel—For two reasons: one is, because I have found out that the baptism which I received in infancy was not valid; the other, because I have plainly seen, from God's Word, that none have a right to the baptism

of water, save those who have believed, and made a profession of their faith.

Father—Tell me, then, in the first place, what led you to believe that your first baptism was not valid?

Samuel—It was at first, as I have already told you, my inability to comprehend the nature of God's ordinance at the time when it was administered to me.

Father—Does this reason still appear sufficient?

Samuel—No, and I give it up; for I have seen that the ordinance of God has its authority in itself. But other reasons besides have caused, and do still cause, me to doubt the validity of my first baptism; and one of them is, my very strong conviction that the minister by whom I was baptized in infancy was far from being a converted man.

Father—Alas, alas! dear brother; this is a new blow to the authority of God's ordinance. The first related to the subject of baptism; it was the little child, whose weakness rendered him incapable of it. Now it is the instrument of the ordinance that annuls it! Your baptism, you say, is not valid, because he who administered it was not a true believer! Ah, dear friend; the more you speak, the more clearly I perceive that your zeal, however sincere it may have been, was without knowledge.

Samuel—In what, pray?

Father—Oh, in supposing that the ordinance of God receives any power or efficacy from the instrument that administers it. No, no, brother, no such thing. What the Lord has instituted is good and perfect in itself, because it is His work. The coin which a prince issues is good on account of his arms or effigy impressed on it, but not on account of the person who makes use of it.

In like manner, the ordinance of the Lord is valid, because it bears the seal of the Almighty, and not on account of the man who transmits it. In like manner, brother, the Lord's Supper is good, not on account of the servant of God who serves the table, but because it was the Lord of that table who said—"*Take, eat : do this in remembrance of me.*" There the servant does not season the dishes ; it is the Word and Spirit of God that do so, and it is faith that enjoys them. It is the same with the baptism of water. It is rendered valid neither by Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, but by the Lord's commandment—"*Go and baptize.*" Here the Word of God and the invocation of His holy name are everything. Let the institution, therefore, be observed and repeated as He enjoins, and it will take care of itself. As to the instruments, let them know, and let us be aware, "that they are nothing" (1 Cor. iii. 7) ; and if Balaam was reproved by the Almighty, although the voice issued from a beast, the Almighty can also bless, though His word be communicated by an impure mouth. If it were otherwise, what would become of God's ordinances in His Church ? What disciple would receive them in peace, if it were necessary first to assure himself of the faith and absolute holiness of the minister who dispensed them. Thus would my conscience be in subjection to the conscience of another, and my God would only bless me, in so far as a sinner like myself would be faithful ! No, dear Samuel, it is not thus ; and I do not hesitate to say that, on this second point, as on the first, you have only acted from prejudice ; and, if for these two reasons alone you have renewed your baptism, it is in the dark that you have done it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAPTISM OF WATER IS NOT A SEAL SET ON FAITH.

Samuel—I confess that I had not made all the observations which you have presented to me, and which, perhaps, are well founded ; so I will not insist on this first point. But as to the second, I do not think it can be denied ; for it is clear enough that the Word of God says faith ought to precede baptism.

Father—For my part, dear Samuel, I am so far from understanding it so, that I, on the contrary, believe that the baptism of water can never, in any case, be more an act of faith than is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Both are from God towards man, and faith [on the part of the recipient] is not necessarily presupposed in either.

Samuel—Accordingly, I have not said that the baptism of water is an act of faith ; but I have said, and I do think, that it is a seal which God puts on man, and that it is, therefore, a sign of the baptism of fire, or of the Holy Spirit, which the believer has received.

Father—If that were so, and if faith were indeed absolutely required of the person who is baptised, John the Baptist would have been in the wrong when he baptized the Lord Jesus with water, and the Lord Himself would not have received the true baptism ; for, assuredly, it was not by faith * that the Saviour lived, nor was it after a profession of faith that John baptized Him ; and, there-

* See note B.

fore, this baptism was neither the sign nor the confirmation of that of the Holy Spirit, since the Lord did not receive the latter until after the former.

Samuel—Ah! I know not if any inference can be drawn from this fact, for is it certain that the baptism of John was the same as that which is administered in the Church?

Father—Oh! What, pray, causes you to doubt it? Do you think that the Head of the Church, who received the baptism of John, did not take on Himself that which his body was to receive? Did the apostles receive any other? And was it not the same baptism that they administered under the orders of their Master, who commenced His ministry precisely by the same preaching as John the Baptist, saying, like him—“*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*”

Samuel—We see, however, in Acts xix., that some disciples, already baptized by John, were baptized a second time in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Father—No, dear brother, that was not the case, and indeed, could not be. For, first, you will perceive, that if the baptism of John had not been the good and true baptism, neither the Lord nor His Apostles would have received it; and, certainly, they were never re-baptized any more than the other disciples of John, spoken of in the Gospel. And as to those whom you mention, your error, with regard to them, proceeds from that of the translation, which, according to the original text (verse 4th), ought to have been—“Then Paul said, as to John, he baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe on Him who was to come after him—viz., on Jesus Christ; (verse 5th), and as to those who heard him, they were baptized in the name

of the Lord Jesus." These two verses are both the discourse of St. Paul, whilst in our versions, the fifth verse is represented as being the narrative of the sacred historian.

Samuel—I cannot judge of the original; but if it is as you say, the meaning is quite plain, for it is nothing more than a remark made by the Apostle on the baptism of John, which he declares to be the same as that of the Saviour.

Father—That is evident to me, and this is the way in which I understand the whole narrative. The Apostle asks certain disciples, if they have received the Holy Spirit, seeing they have believed. They ask if the Holy Spirit has already been given to the Church. And with what baptism, then, were you baptized returns the Apostle, with surprise? They answer with that of John. But, says the Apostle, John's baptism was performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for those who heard the preaching of John heard the Saviour announced.

Samuel—Well, then, I admit your explanation regarding John's baptism; but, as to that which the Saviour received, can it be taken for an example?—is it not an extraordinary event—as it were, an exception?

Father—Predjudice again, Samuel! for, I ask you, where is the model, where is the example in everything, if not in Him who is the Head of the Church, and in whom "all righteousness has been fulfilled?" Does not the baptism of water belong to the dispensation of God's righteousness towards the Church? and this righteousness has been fulfilled by the Saviour. Where, then, should I look to know how the thing ought to be done, and well done, if not to the example of Him who has perfectly accomplished it?

Samuel—What do you mean, dear friend? Do you think that the baptism of water ought only to be received at the age at which the Saviour received it, and in the same manner in which he received it?

Father—I mean, brother, that the baptism of the Saviour, which took place *within* the Church, and not *without* it, shows us in what manner this ordinance of God ought to be dispensed *in* the Church. I say, then, that this baptism of the Saviour is the model for us to follow in His Church; that it is it which constitutes the rule, and the exception is found in the baptism administered *without* the Church.

Samuel—I am quite astonished at this remark, that the baptism of the Saviour took place *within* the Church. I had not before perceived that; and yet nothing is more certain, seeing that the Church is only the body of which the Lord Jesus is the Head. But what do you conclude from it as to baptism?

Father—I conclude from it, that in the Church, baptism ought to follow the same order, if I may say so. Thus, first, as it was at His first visible entrance into the new economy, that the Lord Jesus received the baptism of water; it is also at man's first visible entrance into this economy, that, as a general rule, the baptism of water ought to be administered. Then, as the Lord had not faith [in the same sense in which a sinner must have it in order to be saved*], since he was the object of [such] faith, and did not therefore make any profession of it, neither ought this condition (of faith) to be made essential to baptism when it takes place *in* the Church.

Samuel—What you say may contain some truth; but

* See note B.

yet, in what a multitude of cases was baptism administered by John, by the Apostles, and by the Lord Himself, in a way quite different from what you mention.

Father—*Within* the Church! No, never—not in a single instance. *Without* the Church it undoubtedly was; and it is here that the exceptions exist. Thus the Jew, the Ethiopian, the Greek, or even the German and the Briton, who were *outside* the Church, could not share in that which was practised *within* it. God first brings them near to it by His Word; then, by the confession that they make of having received (not *accepted*), they enter visibly into the Church; and, at this first entrance, receive on themselves (but do *not accept*) the seal of this vocation of grace. This was what took place when the Ethiopian Eunuch, Lydia, and the Jailer of Philippi made their entrance into the Church. This is also what is practised in our own days, when those from without approach it and are admitted. Then, without doubt, a confession of faith is required, for it is necessary to know that they have attained unto the promise before placing the seal of it upon them. It is even possible that the Holy Spirit may have been given to them, as He was to Cornelius and his house; but take particular notice that all this takes place *outside* the Church, and that, therefore, no conclusion can be drawn from it, as to what is done *within* it.

Samuel—Within it, do you say! Ought baptism to be repeated within the Church?

Father—No, no, dear brother; but as the children of Church members are certainly born *in* the Church, I say that, in their case, the rule furnished by the Lord in His own baptism ought to be followed, and that, therefore, they ought to receive it at their visible entrance into the

Church, although the Holy Spirit, which is promised to them, and which, perhaps, like John the Baptist, they have received from their mother's womb, does not yet manifest Himself.

Samuel—So that, good friend, you believe the children of Christians to be members of the Church of Christ ?

Father—Of the *Church obedient* they are certainly not members ; but of the Church *called* and *consecrated* by the name of the Lord Jesus they undoubtedly are ; and, as it is to the latter that the baptism of water belongs, whilst to the former only is given that of the Holy Spirit, with the Lord's Supper, I believe that children, born in the Church, ought to receive *in* it the sign of the promise under which they are called, until, having *by faith* become members of the *Church obedient*, they receive the seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13, 14), and testify that this is the case, by partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Samuel—I understand you now, and admit that your remark on the baptism of the Lord Jesus would have force with regard to infants, if they really were *in* the Church. But it is, I think, on this last point that we differ most in opinion ; for, as to myself, I see the very contrary in the Scriptures.

Father—In what statements, pray ?

Samuel—For instance, when the Saviour, at the end of Mark's Gospel, says—“*He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.*” How admit, on the one side, that an infant, that has not believed, can be baptized, and, on the other, that, not having believed, he belongs to the Church ?

Father—Let us proceed calmly and soberly, dear Samuel ; for perhaps there is much more contained in your words than you mean to convey. And, first, do

you actually believe that all the children of Christian parents that die in infancy are lost?

Samuel—I know that this is a difficult question; I, however, fearlessly reply to it, by saying that they are not; for if they belong to the elect they are saved.

Father—You acknowledge, then, that it is possible for a child to be in heaven a member of the Church, though he should not have evidenced faith on earth.

Samuel—I perceive that that is implied in what I say, though I should not have suspected it.

Father—And you, without doubt, also perceive, that the same child who would be a member of the Church in heaven, may likewise be a member of the Church on earth?

Samuel—Of the Church elect he may, but not of the Church believing.

Father—You mean, I suppose, that a child, so long as he does not believe, cannot show his faith; that is a matter of course, and requires no explanation.

Samuel—Well, then, not having believed, can he, according to God's own words, be baptized?

Father—If the Lord had said, *he who believes*, and *he only*, shall be baptized, he could not; for the prohibition as to the child would have been positive. But He has been very far, indeed, from saying so. For, first, remark that the text says, word for word—*he that believes (or shall believe)*, and is baptized (*or being baptized*), *shall be saved*; which does not mean, positively, that he was baptized after having believed.

Samuel—It is true, if this is the text, that it may be understood as if baptism had preceded.

Father—But above all, I am of opinion that it must be understood of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, inas-

much as, not only is salvation, never in Scripture, made to depend on the baptism of water, but, on the contrary, St. Peter positively declares that it is not such baptism which saves, but exclusively that of the Holy Spirit by which the conscience is purified. (1 Peter iii. 21.) I think, therefore, that the Saviour, in making mention of this baptism, distinguishes true belief from mere outward profession—that is to say, from the light or hypocritical profession of a great number of disciples.

Samuel—But, brother, are there two manners of believing? Is it not written that “There is but one faith, one baptism?” (Eph. iv. 5.)

Father—It is also written that Simon the Magician believed, but that, nevertheless, he had not any part in the things of God. (Acts viii.) It is likewise said of many who had believed that “they went back and walked not more with the Lord Jesus;” and again, that “they went out from the midst of” Christians, “because they were not of them.” (John vi. 66; 1 John ii. 19.)

Samuel—Yet faith is a gift, without repentance, and he who has once believed hath eternal life; how, then, can he cease to believe?

Father—He who believes from the heart, believes by the power of God, and, being baptized by the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13, 14), shall be confirmed unto the end (1 Cor. i. 8) by the faithfulness of God. But many profess to believe, who, not having been baptized by the Holy Spirit, will make shipwreck of their faith. (1 Tim. i. 19.) Now, the Lord makes His apostles aware of this, when He sends them to found His Church amongst the nations.

Samuel—You do not, then, believe that these words of the Saviour can refer to the baptism of water?

Father—I do not think that they can; for you see that the Lord, when He adds that he who does not believe shall be condemned, makes no more mention of baptism; because He knew that, to unbelievers, there was not any occasion to speak of that of the Holy Spirit; whilst, on the contrary, He was not ignorant that many who believed in appearance only had been baptized with water. If, then, He had wished to speak of the baptism of water, it seems to me that He would have said, he who does not believe shall be condemned, *although he has been baptized.*

Samuel—I must say that I am not far from receiving your explanation, seeing that it is according to the analogy of faith. I shall not, therefore, insist on this passage. But there is another which, in my opinion, contains the distinctive characteristic of the Church under the Gospel, and which, certainly, in that view can only be understood in one sense. It is the Prophecy of Jeremiah, quoted by St. Paul, in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, in which it is expressly said that, in the New Covenant, God shall put His laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and they shall not teach every man his brother, nor have need that one teach them, for all shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. Now, since that is absolutely inapplicable to a little child, how is it possible to regard it as a member of the Church, and for that reason to baptize it with water?

Father—Dear Samuel, how can your judgment, or, rather, your peculiar manner of thinking, cause you to interpret the Scriptures in such a manner! What! my good friend! because God declares that the power of the Gospel Covenant shall be spiritual, that a new heart

shall be the characteristic of His elect people, do you thence infer that this promise does not reach or apply to infants, and that it is made only to adults—to those capable of testifying that they have received it, and that they enjoy it. But, brother, if your reasoning is correct, what must we think of the position of children under the old economy, with regard to the spiritual privileges that it contained, which were great in every respect, “because that unto them were committed the oracles of God?” (Rom. iii. 2.) Were not these children members of the Church, when she, submitting herself unto the Lord and walking in His statutes, as, for instance, in the days of Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, of Ezra and Nehemiah, was already receiving in part the fulfilment of the promise, and was prospering under the teaching of the Word? Were the children of faithful and blessed families then cut off from the Church?

Samuel—I do not think so. Since they bore the seal of the covenant, they surely made part of it.

Father—They were in covenant, then, that is to say, they were members of the Church of God, when He said of His people, “Oh, that they had always the same heart, to obey me and to keep my commandments!” and yet, even at that time, they did not know God individually, and had need that one should teach them in His ways.

Samuel—I cannot but acknowledge it.

Father—Since, therefore, during a time of spiritual blessings, the ignorance of children could not deprive them of a privilege which God had caused to reach them, and in the bosom of which they were born; since, when God circumcised the hearts of His people, infants could be partakers of that grace, though as yet incapable of showing that they were so; since then, just as Jere-

miah had been set apart from his mother's womb, many other children, even all the children in a given period, could, in like manner, be blessed, and have in their souls the germ of a spiritual life, though yet themselves entirely ignorant of it; why would you say, when the Lord shall shed this grace abundantly on a people, or only on some families, that children, because incapable of feeling or manifesting it, shall be excluded from that Church? Certainly, brother, they will not be less capable at that time of being in the kingdom and under the influence of the blessing, than they were formerly; and if they know the Almighty according to their capability of knowing Him, shall it be said that they did not enter into the covenant until they were able to make a profession of their faith? If it were thus, Samuel, then there would be no reality in God, and in the council of His grace, before the fulfilment of the blessing in man! And if man is only really in covenant when he is aware of it, when he knows and calls upon the Lord, he was not then in it until he became conscious of it, and, consequently, before his conversion he was out of the covenant. Where, in this case, is the eternal election of God? and how could the Church be redeemed before it could return thanks for its redemption?

Samuel—However, brother, the terms of the prophecy are explicit, and they declare that, under the covenant of the Gospel, all shall know the Lord. Thus, as everything in this new covenant is different from the old, in which all was visible, temporal, carnal, and earthly, whilst all in the new is spiritual and heavenly, so the Church of the latter cannot contain any person who is not yet spiritual.

Father—No, brother; the spiritual Church, the elect

Church, cannot contain any but elect and spiritual persons, and, certainly, in God's sight the body of Christ is only composed of such members. But what prevents, and who has told us, that the child even from his mother's womb has not already a share in this spiritual dispensation? Certainly, if he is one of the elect, he has an interest, whether in the decree of God, or in the work consummated by the Saviour; and it may even be, that he has already partaken of it, by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Yet he does not know anything of it, nor do we, but the thing is not the less real on that account, and God assuredly considers the child *in* that perfect covenant of which He has said, that it would be different from that of the law.

Samuel—Is it then still to the sovereignty of God that you bring back the whole question?

Father—Entirely: and you may see that I am right; for, finally, suppose that God had created this elect child under the first economy, he would neither have been more nor less blessed on that account at his birth. Only he would have been bound to pass under shadows, types, and figures, and through a course of instruction in the law, which he would have borne as a yoke, but whose meaning and beauty he would have comprehended when at an age to discern them. He would then have belonged not only to God's visible people, but also, and especially, to His hidden people, who, having been taught of God, really knew Him. Well, then, if God creates the child at another time, under an economy free from shadows and emblems, is he on that account less one of the elect—less the object of God's love—less called to the possession of privileges—less one of the people that know God and are taught of Him?

CHAPTER V.

THE GOSPEL HAS NOT DEPRIVED THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS
OF THEIR PRIVILEGES.

Samuel—I know not why it is, but I cannot see clearly that it should be so. It always seems to me that children are differently situated under the Gospel from what they were under the economy of the law.

Father—Suppose, however, that, at the coming of the Saviour, the Jewish people, during (if I may call it so) an interval of reason, had, as a nation, in place of rejecting the Messiah, submitted to Him, and that they had thus, as a nation, invoked Him, as much as they had, in their united capacity, invoked and served Jehovah in the Temple, would not the Jewish people in that case have entered into the New Covenant, and would there not have taken place, with regard to them, an accomplishment of the promise which you have quoted, and which, in fact, is to be one day realized towards them? The nation, thus in submission to Christ, would, therefore, have been a spiritual people, disengaged and set free from the earthly shadows of the law, and in possession of all the benefits of the New Covenant. Now, what is to become of the Jewish children who, before that people had submitted themselves to Christ, belonged to the Church which was under the shadows, but which had "great advantages in every way," when their fathers, believing the prophecies, receive and adore the

Son of God, and thus enter into the shining light of the New Covenant? What is to be done under the gracious rays of "the sun of righteousness," with those children who were already blessed when the feeble star of the law alone shone? You say that they will be excluded from the Church, for, as yet, they can neither know nor call upon the Lord. But we reply to you—since they were blessed under the shadows of the law, though they were in the same ignorance, why are they not still more richly blessed when the day of salvation shineth? Is the Gospel to diminish the benefits of election? and is the Old Covenant, in its earthly elements, to show itself more comprehensive, and more loving, towards children than is the perfect law of love? What, then, must I, who (let me suppose a case), as the father of a family under the Levitical economy, was, with all my dear children, in covenant with the Lord, have the bitter grief of seeing them separated from me, and of no longer having my God for their God, because I have received grace to know the Messiah? My children have then, by my conversion, lost their most precious possession—viz., no less than the covenant of God! When I was a believing Jew, they, with me, belonged to the blessed people—to the Church of God; but now that I am a Christian, they are no longer partakers of this benefit, but are, like the children of heathens, "without God and without hope in the world!" It would have been much better for them if their father had not known the Gospel: for Moses was at least a friend and protector for their youth, and for their weakness, whilst this Jesus, whom their father adores, rejects them, and even despoils them of that which He had given them under the law! This is your doctrine, Samuel; do you believe it true?

Samuel—Really, you render me very serious, and I dare scarcely reply to you; for, after all, the Gospel is not narrower than the law.

Father—No, brother: and you might have heard this even from the mouth of an Israelite, who received Christian baptism a few days ago; for as soon as he had been baptized, he presented his little child for the same ordinance, saying that, as the promise had been made to him and his child, the latter ought also to receive the seal of it. A Baptist minister had told him before, that he ought to defer the baptism of his son till the latter should know and confess the Lord Jesus; but the believer had replied thus:—"What, brother, my child, whom I have circumcised, has already on him the seal of the covenant, and now, that he enters with me into the Christian Church, shall I refuse him the benefit of it?"

Samuel—I understand this father. It was, in reality, the Gospel promise that he claimed.

Father—Certainly; and it was of the same Gospel that Isaiah prophesied in the days of the law, when God said by him (Isaiah lxxv. 19-23)—that, after the old things of the ancient covenant should have passed away, He would rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in His people; that His blessing would be upon the child of a few days old, and that the children of the faithful should be with them, because they should be the posterity of the blessed of the Lord. Certainly, brother, if infants cannot be under the New Covenant, because they are not yet capable of knowing the Lord, what is the meaning of this promise, and to what period can this prophecy refer?

Samuel—There is, I confess, something in this that I had not before perceived; for I cannot but see that infants are here the objects of a promise.

Father—Well, carry your researches higher still. Trace up the word to its very source. Listen to the Messiah Himself, when He contemplates beforehand His sacrifice, and when He describes the result. (Psalm xxii.) “I will declare thy name unto my brethren (He says to His Father); and in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel.” Then he adds, “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He is the governor among the nations. A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this.” This, Samuel, is what the Lord says. You see that, passing from the Jews to the Gentiles, “whom He sees from afar,” He extends to both the same blessing, which is addressed to their families—to their race—to their posterity, from age to age. Now, take away the children from these families, withdraw the race, the posterity, from amidst these people, and see what is the meaning of the prophecy, what the value of this promise.

Samuel—I see very well, I assure you, that my opinion contains some weakness; but I do not yet see where the weak point lies.

Father—I think it is in this: that you wish only to see the thing accomplished, and not God’s dispensation in its progress. Your mind is pre-occupied by what God says of the man who believes, and makes a profession of his faith; and you reject the man whom God calls to believe, and whom He rears up and instructs for

the faith. God says, my name is on my people, and my people know me; and you conclude, from this, that the infant has not the name of God on him, and that he does not yet know Him.

Samuel—And is that not correct?

Father—No; because, if God had said, for instance, that His people ate the passover, and then passed over the sea dry-shod, it would not have been just thence to conclude that little children did not form a part of His people, because they could neither eat of the pascal lamb, nor walk at the bottom of the sea. This reasoning would resemble that of a man who should say, that, under the Gospel, little children ought not to eat, because it is written, that “if any will not work, neither shall he eat.” (2 Thess. iii. 10.)

Samuel—But, does my reasoning on the Covenant with regard to children, amount to that?

Father—It seems to me that it does. For God says, the peculiarity of the New Covenant will be, that “all shall know me, because I shall put my laws into their hearts.” From this, you say, that infants are not in this covenant, because they do not know the Lord, whilst you ought to infer from it, that if children are in the covenant they will know the Lord when they have been taught of Him. In like manner, you should say, in reference to the examples cited above, that children would partake of the passover, and would walk across the sea if they had strength; as, under the Gospel, children work, when they are capable of doing so, and thus gain their livelihood.

Samuel—I think I understand you. You wish, do you not, that I should consider the children of Christian parents rather with regard to what God proposes to do for them, than to their actual state?

Father—Yes, brother; otherwise we may be unjust both with regard to them and towards God.

Samuel—How so, if you please?

Father—For instance, if—setting out on the unexceptionable principle, that an unbeliever does not belong to the people of God—you say that neither does a child belong to the people of God, because he does not believe, you confound voluntary unbelief with the absence of faith, and charge the child, who is not yet *able* to believe, with the same fault which he who *will* not believe has committed. In acting thus, you are unjust towards God, who is perhaps the God of this child, whom His love has chosen; again, you are also unjust to the child, who, all incapable as he is of knowing and believing, is, nevertheless, in a very different position from the sinner, who is in rebellion against God.

Samuel—I admit your distinction. I would, however, again ask if the child, so long as he has not faith, can possess the privileges of faith?

Father—The Word of God says, dear Samuel, that the child is heir and lord of all, though he is still under tutors and governors. It is the same with an elect person, infant as he is, the promises belong to him, though as yet, he is neither able to understand them, nor to bless God for them. I shall take good care not to confound the child under age, with respect to faith, with the child who has grown up, and turned out a rebel, and who is disinherited.

Samuel—This distinction is certainly just; I cannot, however, see how a child, who does not actually possess faith, can be considered as belonging to the body of Christ.

Father—Say then, dear Samuel, that he does not belong

to the body acting, that he is not a member of the Church that knows and serves God ; but you have no better right to say that he does not belong to the body of Christ, than, witnessing a battle, you would have to say that the conscripts, who are not in the *melée*, do not belong to the army. They certainly do belong to the army, but have not yet been engaged in actual combat.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOSPEL DOES NOT SEPARATE CHILD FROM PARENT.

Samuel—Does the sum of your reasoning, then, amount to this, that the children of those who have entered into covenant, are, with their parents, in that covenant?

Father—This, as you have seen, is what the Messiah says, (Psalm xxii.)—This is that “seed accounted to the Lord for a generation.” I, for my part, do not feel any doubt on the subject. In the children of believers, I see recruits of the Church militant, and, as long as they do not desert their colours, I certainly consider them as belonging to that army.

Samuel—And do you think that the ordinances of the Church belong to the children of believers?

Father—The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper does not yet belong to them, because it is an *active duty* of faith. But that of the enrolment, if I may express it so, that is to say, of the baptism of water, undoubtedly does; because it is not an *active duty*, but a mark—a seal of their calling and admission by sovereign grace on the part of God, who affixes it Himself, and on a passive subject.

Samuel—But is this distinction which you make between the two ordinances scriptural?

Father—Undoubtedly; for, as we have already seen with regard to the Lord’s Supper, it is said to him who is to partake of it *examine thyself, then do this.* (1 Cor.

xi. 28.) But as regards baptism, it is not said *examine thyself*, but *be baptized*; that is to say, receive the seal, be marked with the name of the Lord. Moreover (and I repeat it), it is always in this sense that baptism is administered. The Lord's words are *go and baptize*. Peter says "be baptized every one of you;" and Philip says not, *do it*, but, "thou mayest be baptized."

Samuel—You thence conclude, I see, that, if a child is called of God he is quite as suitable a recipient of the seal of baptism as the man who believes and makes a profession.

Father—Assuredly; for, again, it is not from what is marked by a seal that the seal receives either its impress or its authority.

Samuel—So that, according to you, the little child ought to receive the *initiative* sign under the New Covenant, as he received it under the old?

Father—And you also say the same, Samuel; for, observe that your doubt is not if the seal of the covenant ought to be put on him who is in that covenant, but you ask if it can concern a child. Therefore, if it is demonstrated to you, from God's Word, that such a child is in the covenant, it will also be demonstrated that he ought to receive the seal of it.

Samuel—So your principle is, that baptism—the sign or seal of the New Covenant—may, and often ought to be administered to those who have not faith.

Father—To the *unbeliever* never; but to a *non-believer* it certainly ought.

Samuel—Do you see proofs of this in Scripture?

Father—A great number. For, without speaking of Simon the magician, who was baptized, and who, although he professed to believe, never had faith, we see,

from the Gospels, that several of the Lord's disciples went back and walked no more with Him. (John vi. 66; 1 John ii. 19.) Now, these disciples had been surely baptized, and by the Lord Himself (John iv. 2); and He, who knew from the beginning who those were whom the Father had given Him, knew also those who had faith. It was not, then to faith in them that Jesus appended the seal of baptism; for if they had been believers they never would have turned aside from Him. Therefore, to say that the baptism of water is the sign or confirmation of faith, seems to me to accuse the Lord Himself, and to say that His baptism was wrong; that He was deceived when He made His disciples.

Samuel—I see it: this conclusion is strictly correct; for, to suppose that no one of those who abandoned the Lord, had been baptized by Him, would be the wildest fancy, seeing that they were called *His* disciples; and, moreover, we do not find that the Twelve had made even one disciple whilst they were present with their Master. Accordingly, from this hour, I will never say again, that the baptism of water was given by the Lord in confirmation of faith, or as a seal put upon it. But, has it not always followed a profession of that faith? Is mention made in Scripture of a single person having been baptized who had not made a profession before being thus sealed by that ordinance?

Father—Referring here to what I said on the baptism of the Lord Jesus, before which no confession of faith was made, I will repeat, that if such confession must be made by those who, not being already in the Church, are called to it, it is not the same with those who already belong to it. The baptism of water proclaims the promise of grace, which is in the name of the Father, Son,

and Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, joined to that promise, which it accompanies and seals, and it applies to every being to whom the promise extends—that is to say, whom the Lord has caused to attain unto it. If, therefore, I am the person whom God has caused to attain unto it, I am the person to whom the ordinance of baptism ought to be administered, because this baptism amounts to saying—“*Thou who art thus sealed with water art under the promise.*” I, therefore, am marked by this baptism, because, according to God’s will, I am the subject of this promise, the spiritual benefit of which I shall enjoy, if I receive it in my heart by faith.

Samuel—This view, dear friend, is new to me. It is the same principle of the sovereignty of God, to which you always recur. It is God, according to His own will, including under His promise of grace whom He pleases, and putting upon them the seal of that dispensation, of that calling.

Father—Yes, brother; it is the subject of this sovereign promise, whom God thus marks, and at the same time that He, by this mark, commands him to believe the promise, by this preaching—symbolical and addressed to the senses—He publishes and recalls it to memory in the midst of a people to whom it extends, and who hear and see it at every baptism of which they are witnesses. Now you understand, surely, that, as I have received baptism, because the promise extends to me, if the promise applies also to my child, he ought to be marked by the same seal, because he is also one of the subjects of this covenant.

Samuel—Yes; but just there lies the question. Under the Gospel is the child in covenant because his father is?

Father—He is, and undoubtedly was ever since the

commencement of the Church on earth, or ever since the promise of grace, which is the covenant of God towards man, was made to the human race.

Samuel—Be good enough to show me that; for this subject possesses the deepest interest for me.

Father—In the first place, here, at the very opening of the Bible, is a fact which strikes me. It is said (Gen. iv. 26) of Seth, that “to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.” That is to say, that from the very earliest period of the world, on the occasion of the birth of a child, we see that the Lord’s name was invoked, and that this invocation, from thenceforth, constitutes *the Church*—the people of God, distinct and separate from the impious race of Cain; and that this Church, thus commenced at the birth of the eldest child of Seth, the believer, is constituted *in the family* of that faithful man, and is composed of his children, of his race, which remains distinguished from the family of Cain, by the name of the Almighty invoked upon it, and by that of the *sons* or *children* of God which it bears. Certainly here, I mean in this *primitive Church*, and for nearly seven centuries afterwards, the family is reputed the Church, and the children, who are members of it, are precisely the “seed that shall serve Him,” and in which the Church is continued. You see, therefore, in those first ages of the Gospel (for it was the promise without the law that was then announced), that children were born *in* the Church, and that, even at that early period, God’s name had already been named upon them.

Samuel—I thank you for having shown me this fact, which I had not before perceived, and which seems to me as indisputable as interesting. I cannot but acknow-

ledge that then, the name of the Lord was certainly invoked over the child, as well as over the father.

Father—You will also grant that it was by God's authority this was done, and according to the covenant of His promise; for we are aware that, then also, God taught His people among whom was offered that sacrifice which was the worship of the Almighty, and at which their families were present. Therefore, to suppose that children were shut out from the solemn worship, would be inconsistent with the very constitution of the Church in those days.

Samuel—No, I do not think that that supposition is allowable.

Father—But it was the case until the time when the Church, having become corrupted, was confounded with the descendants of Cain. Then Noah, the only head of a family who remained faithful, was likewise the only one, with his children, to whom the promise extended. The Church no longer existed except in the ark; and, a short time after the deluge, it was only in the family of Shem that God's people were to be found, until Abraham, one of his descendants, became, in his family, the special repository of the promise of the covenant. And you observe, do you not, that from the origin of the Church until that time, it was not of individuals picked out, so to speak, from different places and various families, that it was composed, but that it was propagated, or rather increased, by families, races, and generations, until the day when the Lord, specifying the particular family in which His promise was to be accomplished, willed that that family should add to the name of God invoked upon it, a sign or seal of the covenant, which hereafter was to belong to it alone.

Now, dear brother, will you observe two things—one, that this dispensation, which lasted more than two thousand five hundred years, was always that of the promise of grace; the other, that when the visible seal was to be added to the invocation of God's name, it was a spiritual mark.

Samuel—Spiritual! Dou you call the outward ordinance of circumcision a spiritual mark?

Father—You know that St. Paul calls it “a seal of the righteousness of the faith” (Rom. iv. 11); and further, if, like baptism, it was material in its form, it had reference in reality to the spiritual circumcision of the heart, of which it was intended constantly to remind the Jews.

Samuel—Was not this ordinance, however, enjoined on Abraham, to set his race apart, with a special view to temporal blessings?

Father—That circumcision had also this object, I grant; but its spiritual meaning cannot be forgotten, since it is the latter which Scripture gives to it, and which also the prophets and apostles refer to again and again.

Samuel—That is very true, and I see it clearly.

Father—You see, then, that although circumcision had a spiritual meaning, the infant who could not comprehend it received it, nevertheless; and that then, as in the time of Seth, and afterwards in that of Shem, the name of the Almighty was invoked over the child of the believer. Now, this constitution of the Church on earth, under the covenant of promise, did not change from its commencement till the time of Moses—that is to say, during more than two thousand five hundred years. And observe, moreover, that this Church was

propagated in a single family, which was that of Seth, of whom Noah, then Shem, and afterwards Terah and Abraham were the descendants.

Samuel—I had not made this observation, which is certainly worthy of consideration, since it in fact shows us the Church perpetuated from race to race [in the same family.]

Father—That certainly does not mean that every child of these families was one of God's elect, which was not the case; but it means that God, in the dispensation of His promise, willed that the calling and gathering together of the Church should take place in this manner, and that children, set apart with their fathers, by the name of the Lord, should form the people to whom His promises, revelations, and oracles would be committed. His election of grace was above this dispensation, out of which, and by faith, He brought the Church of the first born.

Samuel—I understand you. It was, do you say, the Church called that was thus constituted from the beginning, and it was from among these consecrated families that the Lord gathered His elect?

Father—I cannot see anything else in the history of the promise of grace, until the time of Moses: from that time, under the law, during the fifteen centuries of its existence, I see the same constitution—viz., children with their fathers called and sealed with the name of God, as they had been from the beginning of the world in the families of the patriarchs.

Samuel—Really the condition of the children of believers is beginning to appear different from what I had hitherto believed it; and what strikes me most is this principle of the sovereignty of God, who, according to

His will, sets apart and consecrates the subjects of His promise.

Father—Be assured, Samuel, as I have already said to you, that it is this heavenly principle of which the Baptist loses sight in his system; and that, in doing so, he cuts off something from the glory of the promise.

Samuel—I cannot say that I have this feeling; quite the contrary: I certainly gave all glory to God, when, in obedience to His command, I received His ordinance of baptism after having believed. In like manner, it was in good conscience, and in complete humiliation of myself before the Lord, that I brought my child to Him in Spirit, and consecrated him to the Lord, imploring a blessing upon him.

Father—And thus, I would add, in your ignorance of God's claims, you have in good conscience forgotten His Word, and done a deed which was not permitted to you.

Samuel—I, brother? oh! what deed, I pray you?

Father—You! to pretend of yourself to *consecrate* a creature of God! As if man, sinful and impure as he is, could ever by his own authority, and by his own feelings, ceremonies, or vows, *render holy that which God has not sanctified!*

Samuel—You astonish me, my friend! do you speak seriously?

Father—What I say is very serious, for it relates to the right and majesty of Almighty God, “who will not give His glory to another.” Now, brother, it is the Lord who sanctifies; it is He who consecrates for His own service, as it is He who foreknows, calls, and justifies. What God declares to be defiled, remains so, whatever opinion man may have of it, or whatever ceremony of consecration he may employ to cleanse it. In like man-

ner, what God declares to be holy, is holy, and continues to be so, no matter how little value man may set upon it. There is an infinite distance between God and man, and this distance can only be passed over by the grace which descends from God to us, but which never ascends from man to heaven.

And therefore I say that neither *your presentation*, as you call it, of your child to God, nor your tender and fervent prayers, nor any ceremony whatever that you can have employed, has succeeded in rendering *holy to God* what He Himself has not made holy; and that if you have conceived the idea of thus setting your child apart to the Lord, you have usurped the right of God, who never gives this power to any parent.

Samuel—Yet Hannah consecrated her son to the Lord?

Father—Yes, but had not God said that all the first-born belonged to Him? And did Samuel not also belong to that holy race which was (chosen) to bear the name of God? And again, was it otherwise than by the name of the Almighty that he was set apart?

Samuel—But parents brought (*presented*) their children to the Lord Jesus: have not I done the same thing?

Father—The same thing! yes; and for that very reason you ought to have looked upon your child, as the parents of whom you speak looked upon theirs—that is to say, as *holy to the Lord*, as belonging to His people, to His Church.

Samuel—And so I do, dear brother: I consider my child as holy; for I have prayed for him with all my soul: now, it is written that “every creature of God is sanctified by prayer.”

Father—No, dear Samuel, but it is written, “by the

Word of God and prayer," and not by prayer alone; and in this consists the extreme difference which the Bible puts between *faith* and *superstition*. The latter persuades itself of a thing, then it prays and makes vows. *Faith*, on the contrary, believes what God has written in His own Word, then prays in conformity to His will, but never according to its own imaginings. What a difference in these two courses!

Samuel—Do you believe, then, that a Baptist Church which assembles with the children belonging to its families to *present them to the Lord*, performs an act of superstition?

Father—Certainly; for either these children are holy through the name of God, or else they are not; and if they are not, it is a sin even to suppose that they are, and it is a still greater sin to pretend to make them holy. Now, in the opinion of Baptists, the children of Christians are not *consecrated by God*: these children ought not therefore to be among His people, and this *presentation* is quite as vain as, under the Law, that of an unclean beast would have been on the altar of the Lord. Neither the intention, nor the prayers, nor the ceremonies of all Israel would have rendered holy to the Lord that victim which He had not Himself consecrated.

Samuel—But, dear friend, my child was certainly holy, for God says to St. Peter that he must not call any man unclean, inasmuch as God had cleansed them all (Acts x. 15).

Father—What reasoning, Samuel! what a way of interpreting Scripture! What, my friend! because God says that the Gospel is to be preached to every nation without distinction, and thus indicates that the wall of

separation of the law has been taken away, do you thence conclude that your child is consecrated to God, and that consequently he may be, as you say, presented to Him in the Church? Well, if such is the purity, or the consecration of your child, that of every other child in the world is the same; and therefore, you have quite as much reason to bring forward the children of Turks and heathens into the midst of your Church, and to *present them with yourselves* to the Lord.

Samuel—And yet, . . . I feel that I could not present the child of a Mussulman to God, in the same way that I have presented my own. Nor do I see how a Christian Church could have in its assembly infants of Turks or heathens, and present them to the Lord. There must, therefore, be in this, something that I do not yet perceive, or else, something that I do not understand according to Scripture.

Father—That something, dear Samuel, is the authority of God; it is His Word; you have forgotten both, with regard to your child, and have substituted your *own feeling* for the divine declaration.

Samuel—That is to say, according to your view, I have been superstitious rather than believing?

Father—So it appears to me, my good friend.

Samuel—What then ought I to have done?

Father—You ought, first, to have assured yourself, from the Word of God rightly understood, that your child was consecrated by His will; then, after having ascertained that he was, you ought to have invoked over him the Word of that consecration, and to have prayed the Lord to realize the promise that it contains. To have acted in this manner, would have been a manifestation of faith.

Samuel—But I pray you, by what Word of the Lord was my child consecrated?

Father—By that of the covenant of promise, brother; that is to say, by the same Word which, at the very commencement of the Church on earth, consecrated the children of Seth, and afterwards those of Shem and Abraham. That Word has never changed, nor has it ever been revoked.

Samuel—But, brother, has not the Gospel abolished these old things? “Are not all things now become new?”

Father—Nay, rather, I would ask you was it not the Gospel, that is to say, the promise of grace, that Seth, Shem, and Abraham knew and believed? Was it not to this Gospel that the law rendered testimony? Was it not this covenant, of which Melchisedec was priest, and in which the fathers were? (Heb. vii.) Was it not of this covenant that Jesus, the true Melchisedec, is the eternal mediator? Was it the old things of the law that were in view, when Abraham, as St. Paul observes, was blessed by this priest of the order of free grace? What a mistake, my good friend; what confusion of times and dispensations is it not, thus to cast upon the Church of the patriarchs, which, existed more than twenty-five centuries, the legal coloring of the Levitical dispensation! It was the promise, it was the covenant of grace, it was Christ and His fulness, which, in those remote times constituted the object of faith, as they do in the present day. The law, with its shadows and ordinances, was superadded to the promise in the kingdom and Church of the promise; and if the Gospel, by its splendour, has “brought life into full light,” it has not for that reason changed the nature of the covenant,

which, from the time of the promise made in the garden of Eden until the incarnation of God's Son in the "seed of the woman," has had but one and the same constitution.

Samuel—Your opinion, then, is, that the relation in which children stand to their parents, in the Church, is the same now as it was in the patriarchal times and under the law.

Father—Unquestionably. Election, certainly, is not more hereditary at the present time than it was then. Now, therefore, as ever, the elect family of the Lord is born neither of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh; but at this day, as ever, what God has consecrated is holy to Him, and what His Word has instituted remains. Therefore, Samuel, as under the Gospel God has not revoked His first Word, with regard to the children of believers, neither shall man do it, whatever his ignorance or errors concerning it may be.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT HAS ONCE BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE LORD, EXISTS
AS LONG AS HE HIMSELF DOES NOT REVOKE IT.

Samuel—It is true that God did not formally abolish what He had declared concerning the children of His ancient people, but then He has neither repeated nor confirmed it; which He would have done, I think, if it had been His will to continue it in force.

Father—Again, Samuel, how you reason! What! good friend, do you regard the ordinance of the Lord as revoked, because He has not published it anew? According to this reasoning, the commandments, the precepts, the instructions, the promises, and the consolations in which the prophetic writings abound, are null to us, because they have not been repeated and reproduced in the Gospel? We may just as well fear a second deluge, because the promise that God made to Noah has not, in formal terms, been repeated! What doctrine, brother!

Samuel—In fact, my reasoning is not just. Yes, I perceive that the things which God has established remain, unless He revokes them by a command as express as was that of their institution. It was in this manner, I see, that He put an end to the Levitical ordinances: He formally revoked them.

Father—Then, dear brother, if the relation of parent and child, as it existed in the primitive Church, was not an essential part of the Levitical law (which is the only

thing that has been revoked), why would you say that this relation has terminated, if God Himself has not said so?

Samuel—I confess that I cannot. It does, however, appear to me, that if the Lord Jesus had willed that the children of believers, under the Gospel, should be members of His Church, and that they should bear the seal of it, He would have said so : for the matter was important.

Father—Well, let us see if this reasoning will stand. Tell me, Samuel, do you believe that the fourth commandment is still in force under the Gospel ?

Samuel—Certainly ; and for two substantial reasons : one, that the reason assigned for the commandment—that is to say, “ God rested ”—is the same at this day as it was at the commencement of the world ; the other, that the commandment did not belong to the Levitical law, and, consequently, was not revoked with it.

Father—And do you also think that the substitution of the first day of the week for the seventh was according to the Divine will ?

Samuel—Certainly ; since, whilst the commandment to sanctify every seventh day is observed, the analogy of faith as to the resurrection of the Saviour is likewise preserved. Furthermore, I cannot believe that the Apostolic Church would have made this substitution, unless it had been according to the direction of the Holy Spirit by which it was guided.

Father—Yet, my brother, although this *matter* also *was important*, the Lord has given no directions concerning it ; for He has not only avoided a formal repetition of the fourth commandment, but He has, moreover, made no mention of the substitution of one day for another.

Why, then, according to your own reasoning, do you keep the Sabbath, and transfer it to the first day of the week ?

Samuel—I confess that my reasoning is not consistent; since, if I am satisfied with my own inductions relative to the fourth commandment, I ought also to admit their application to the question which now occupies us.

Father—That is what I think: and, for that reason, I fearlessly affirm that now, under the Gospel (as in all ages under the same Gospel), the children of believers belong to the Church, whether because the appointment that related to them has not been revoked, or because the object of the appointment is always the same, or because their consecration is according to the analogy of faith; or, in short, because the Apostolic Church looked upon them as holy, which it would not have done if it had not been led to do it by the Spirit of God.

First, where is it said in Scripture that God has withdrawn or abolished the blessing extended to children from the beginning—and in a more marked manner in the family of Abraham, before and during the law? The Scriptures contain no such statement, and, therefore, I have no right, for any reason whatever, to suppose it.

I conclude, then, with regard to this first point, that the blessing, not being revoked, is still in force, and that therefore now, as then, it is in accordance with Divine institution that the name of the Almighty should be called upon the child of a believing parent, to whom God says now, as He said then—"I am thy God, and the God of thy posterity, and my promise is made to thee and to thy children." Let a Seth, then, or an Abraham re-appear now, and his family, sealed with the

name of the Almighty, will be called the "sons" or children "of God," and will, by that name, be separated from the ungodly, who disown and reject this sacred seal.

Moreover, I see, even under the legal dispensation, that the consecration of children is not based on a Levitical ordinance, but on a spiritual reason, which is the name and glory of the Almighty placed upon them with a seal equally spiritual (Rom. iv. 11). I likewise find two commandments of the moral law which relate to them; of these one (the second in the decalogue) blesses or curses them from generation to generation; and the other (which is the fifth) enjoins a duty on them, by attaching a promise to it.

I conclude, then, in the second place, that children are in the Church of God, to which His name, His glory, His commandments, and His promises belong; and that they are in it not in virtue of an ordinance which has come to an end, but of a spiritual reason, which is the same to-day as it ever was.

I go further. Fifteen centuries having passed away after the time of Moses, I see Him who was "to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," first make His appearance (Malachi iv. 6); then the Lord Himself, who, having in the Church received the baptism of water before that of the Holy Spirit, makes several declarations which, far from abolishing the primitive consecration of the children of believers, confirm it, and give to it a new lustre. Thus, according to the prophecy that foretold of Jesus (Isaiah xl. 11) that "He would gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom," I hear Him bless the little children whom He took in

His arms, and on whom He laid His hands (Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13); and, according to analogy of faith, I conclude that those children whom He *received and blessed* do certainly form part of the "sheep of His pasture."

I likewise hear Him saying of these little children (who, because they were Jewish, were already consecrated) that the kingdom of heaven belonged to them; and from this, I, according to the analogy of faith, conclude that the Gospel, which is the kingdom of heaven, does not reject them from its bosom.

The Saviour also says of these little ones, that they can be received in His name, because they are His disciples, because they belong to Him (Matt. xviii. 5; Mark ix. 41); and from this I conclude, again reasoning from the analogy of faith, that these children, far from being separated from their believing parents, do, with them, form part of the people on whom the name of Christ is named, and that they are therefore His disciples.

Samuel—His disciples, do you say! How can a little child be a disciple?

Father—And why not, if that discipleship be of divine authority, and if it be entered into, not by choice or acquiescence, but by divine authority and grace? Did not the children of the slave family become *disciples of liberty*, that they might be instructed by her, though they did not so much as know her? And we ourselves, Samuel, are we not disciples of the fulness of knowledge which is in Christ, though, in many respects, we are still strangers, both in knowledge and feeling, to the mysteries which, nevertheless, retain us under their sway?

Samuel—It is still, then, God's sovereignty and the majesty of His dispensation that you look to in this?

Father—Yes, always ; for he who thinks he cannot be a disciple of God without his own consent, does not understand what is meant by being a disciple. When the Lord determines that His promise shall extend to a tribe of men, and that the families of such a tribe shall know Him—it is this decree of God that constitutes these persons His disciples, and they are as much disciples at the present time, as they will be when the promise is proclaimed to them, or when they profess to believe ; then, indeed, they will be *believing, obeying, true and enfranchised disciples*, as their master says (John viii. 30–33) ; but they will not, for that reason, be more “accounted to the Lord for the generation” on whom His name is named, for they already belong to it by God’s own appointment.

Samuel—This view is new to me. I always understood that a disciple was a believer, or at least one who had actually been taught.

Father—That opinion was faulty in this, that in it the supremacy of the divine institution was forgotten. Thus, for instance, during the legal dispensation, the infant was with his parents under the teaching of the Levitical ordinances, of which he was *the disciple* from his very entrance into life. And it was not by choice, but by *divine appointment* that he was placed under these doctrines, ordinances, and promises ; and in this he differs essentially from the children of Moab or Javan, who were only the disciples of error.

Samuel—That is very clear to me, as to the law ; but is it the same of the spiritual doctrine of the Gospel ?

Father—Let us avoid all groundless distinctions, dear Samuel, and not forget that the law also was spiritual in the truth which it contains, both doctrine and promises.

Samuel—I thank you, good friend; you did well to reprove me.

Father—Understand, then, this, that when the Lord Jesus pronounced the severe parable of the husbandmen, He declared to the chief men amongst the Jews that the kingdom of God would be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. By that nation you are aware He meant the Gentiles, and that kingdom of God was the dispensation of the covenant of promise, as possessed by the Jewish people at that time, with the single exception of the Levitical ordinances, which were only an accident, a transitory circumstance in the constitution of that kingdom. But in that kingdom, and according to its fundamental constitution, children were not separated from their fathers, and were to bear upon their persons the name of the Almighty; according to the analogy of faith, I may therefore safely conclude that now, as then, children are included with their fathers in this kingdom, and that the name of God ought to be invoked upon them.

Samuel—What shall I reply to you? This inference is only simple and natural; shall I then refuse to admit it?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APOSTLES REGARDED THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS AS
MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

Father—You will still less refuse the evidence contained in the constitution of the Apostolic Church, whether during the life of the Apostles or in the time which immediately followed. And, in the first place, observe that, when the Holy Spirit makes mention, for the first time, of this sending of the kingdom of God to the nations, the children of the Gentiles are specified as having the same interest in it that Jewish children under the covenant had. Here is the fact. (Acts ii. 38.) The Apostle Peter had just forcibly expounded to the multitude of assembled Jews the doctrine of salvation by faith in the name of the Lord Jesus. Reproved in their consciences, they anxiously demanded what they must do to obtain this great salvation: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Now, brother, why is mention thus made of children, since the Jews only put the question for themselves? Ah! it is, that in saying *we* they did not separate themselves from their little ones. It was thus that the Apostle understood this "*we*," and he replied

to it by the assurance that their children were also under the call of the Gospel promise, and that their calling on the name of the Lord Jesus would not break the tie that united them to their families, and that it would not abolish either the blessings or the privileges that the children of Jewish parents had enjoyed. At the same time, the Apostle, contemplating the Church in the midst of the nations, declared that it would be the same for the people that were yet afar off, and that, as the Lord would call them into His Church, they also should possess the promise for their children as well as for themselves. Therefore, Samuel, the kingdom of God in passing from the Jews to the Gentiles, was so far from changing its spiritual constitution, that it, on the contrary, preserved for the child what he already possessed with his father, by addressing the promise to both. Do you see this, good friend?

Samuel—How not see a declaration so positive! for, in short, these words, "*even as many as the Lord our God shall call,*" do not relate to the children of Jews (as I have sometimes heard those who quoted this passage say), but they denote the Gentiles, who at that time were still afar off, and whom God calls from time to time. That is equally clear to me.

Father—To us, then, who are these Gentiles called into the Church, and to our children with us, the promise belongs, and on the same terms on which it belonged to the Jews and their children. For, in short, there are neither two Churches, two faiths, two baptisms, nor two kingdoms of God. What was on that day promised and secured to the Jewish families, is promised and secured in the present day to ours. In the present day, therefore, as regards us Gentiles who are called, children are in-

separable from their parents—both are equally included in the promise; God is the God of both in the same manner; and His great name, which is the sign and seal of this promise, is named upon both, that, if they believe it, the child may, with the father, be a sharer in the benefits which it announces and contains. Is it not so, Samuel?

Samuel—I know not if it be ignorance on my part, or rather conviction of the truth, but it seems to me that it would only be by subtilties that I could reject this evidence. And yet, though I see in this declaration the federal relation of children with their fathers, I do not see that therefore the baptism of water belongs to them.

Father—I think I perceive, by your expression *belongs to them*, that you still entertain the idea that children ought to show a sort of inclination or preparation for this ordinance, and that you do not sufficiently consider that as circumcision was a sign of consecration, the baptism of water is also a sign of it.

Samuel—It is however as a sign of consecration that I now consider the baptism of water.

Father—Well, if this is a sign of consecration attached to the promise of grace, ought it not to be placed on him to whom this promise and consecration extend?

Samuel—But, dear brother, is there not a marked difference between the sign of circumcision and that of baptism? Did not the Lord say, concerning the latter, “teach all nations before baptizing them?” Is not that written at the end of St. Matthew’s Gospel?

Father—Not at all, good friend. For if some versions present this false meaning, all do not (see Piscator’s German version, Matthew xxviii. 19); neither does the original text say so.

Samuel—What does it then say, if you please?

Father—The Lord Jesus, who is a Saviour to any nation whatever, and not to the Jewish nation only, at the moment of parting from those whom He sent forth, gave them a charge to preach to all the world without distinction. "Go," said He to them, "and make disciples of all nations." Then indicating the manner in which this work was to be accomplished, He added, "baptizing them in the name of the Lord, and teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." The first command is then a mission of the Apostles over the surface of the earth; the second is the declaration that the disciples of this mission shall be baptized first, and taught afterwards. Baptism, therefore, is here the sign of consecration in the name of God; and the individual who is thus set apart, ought afterwards to be instructed in everything connected with the promise that this great name contains.

Samuel—But do we see that the Apostles understood it thus?

Father—Certainly, how otherwise could they have baptized entire families?

Samuel—Ah! the fact of having baptized entire families does not seem to me to prove it, whether because it was a very uncommon occurrence, and, as it were, an exception, or rather, because the account given of these baptisms seems to establish clearly enough that the members of those families were all adults and believers.

Father—Are you sure, my good friend, that your reasons are well founded? And first, suppose that in reality, only some families were spoken of as having been thus baptized, would the smallness of their numbers weaken the argument? And would the Apostles have baptized

an entire family, even once, had the practice been contrary to their commission ?

Samuel—Certainly not ; I have therefore done wrong in quoting the infrequency of the fact as an argument against it.

Father—Besides, the occurrence was far from being rare ; for several families are specified by name, and many are presented to us in a similar situation : for instance, those who composed the Church of Tyre (Acts xxi. 5), whom we see (fathers, mothers, and children,) united and prostrated before God in prayer. As to what you say, that probably the baptized families contained adults only, why suppose it, since it is not written.

Samuel—But it seems quite evident to me that they were adults. For instance, it is said of the jailer of Philippi, that he “rejoiced, believing in God *with all his house.*” His family, therefore, also believed before being baptized.

Father—I do not think so ; for, observe first, that the jailer, having said to Paul and Silas : “Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?” they replied to him, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house ;*” thus indicating that the submission of the head of the house to the Lord would also bring out his family from the darkness of idolatry. Believe me, furthermore, when I affirm to you, that the Greek text does not say, and cannot mean, “that the jailer rejoiced at having believed *with all his house ;*” but it says that he rejoiced *in (or with) all his house*, that (or because) he had believed. It is therefore evident that the head of the house is here the only believing disciple specified. A circumstance which occurs again, in what relates to

Lydia, who, having believed, was baptized, with her household. (Acts, xvi. 14.)

Samuel—Is it not, however, said that some brethren were in Lydia's house? Did not these brethren belong to her family? And was it not, consequently, composed of adults?

Father—Once again, Samuel, why suppose what is not stated; and thus add to the Scriptures? And besides, had this family really been composed of believing adults, would not Lydia have said, "if ye judge *us* faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." Whereas, speaking of herself only, she said, "if ye judge *me* faithful." As to those brethren whom the Apostles saluted in her house, is it not quite natural to infer that the jailer and other disciples had met there? Had it been Lydia's children that were referred to here, is it to be supposed that the Apostle would not have specified them by this term?

Samuel—Your remarks may be well founded; and yet I cannot get rid of the objection, which seems to me very strong, that if infants had been baptized by the Apostles, they would certainly have made mention of it, at least once; but they have not done so.

Father—My dear friend, how different the same fact appears, according to the way in which it is viewed: from the Apostles not having said, *we have baptized such and such a child*, you conclude that they never did baptize; and I, from the same silence, draw a positive proof that they certainly did.

Samuel—But how? for may not I now say to you, why suppose what is not written?

Father—I do not wish to suppose anything: I only wish to reason justly and according to what is written.

And, first, you acknowledge, I suppose, that a thing may take place in the Church, and habitually, too, though mention is not made of it in the sacred writings. You admit, for instance, that among the Jews, children were taught to read, though God did not give a formal command to that effect, and although we are nowhere told that such was the case.

Samuel—Undoubtedly; and I know also what that example points to.

Father—Here is another. Though neither the Lord nor any of His Apostles had said, either that women were to partake of the Lord's Supper, or that they did even once partake of it, do you not admit that custom to be good, and entirely Scriptural?

Samuel—Certainly; and I see that I really cannot, from the silence of the Apostles regarding this practice, infer that it was not followed by the Apostolic Church.

Father—Their silence on infant baptism cannot, then, be a proof that it was not practised in their time; and not only that, but I think that this silence proves the contrary.

Samuel—You mean, perhaps, that, as baptism was a customary affair, the thing was done as a matter of course, and that, consequently, there was no occasion to speak of it.

Father—Precisely; for, in short, you would not say that neither Samuel, the son of Elkanah, nor Israelitish children in general, were circumcised during the time of the Judges and Kings, because the fact of their circumcision is not related in history.

Samuel—Quite the contrary, I should say; for since the sacred historian makes mention of the omission of this ordinance during the sojourn of the Israelites in

the desert, had such an omission occurred again, at any other period, he would have spoken of it also. (Joshua v.)

Father—Well, brother, it would be in this manner that I would interpret the silence of the Apostles, if they really were silent on this subject. I would say that, as the thing was a matter of course, they had no occasion to mention it in express terms. Moreover, I am so sure of the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit, that I feel quite certain, if God's will with regard to baptism had been other than this, He would have revealed it. Yes, brother, it seems to me that the faithfulness of the Saviour is quite as much concerned in this matter as it was when He said to His disciples, with regard to the heavenly mansions—"If it were not so I would have told you." (John xiv. 2.) I do not doubt, therefore, that if it had been otherwise, as regarded infants, than it had been up to that period with regard to them, the Lord would have said so expressly, for He is faithful.

Samuel—Yet, my brother, it seems to me that if the Lord Jesus had baptized infants, the Apostles, who must have seen and known that He did so, would not have repelled them from His person.

Father—Your conclusion proves too much, dear friend; for the fact, taken in the sense in which you understand it, would only demonstrate that the Lord, until that time, had not baptized families. Besides, insisting on His faithfulness on a subject of so much importance, I draw from this fact a conclusion quite contrary to yours, namely, that if the Lord had excluded children from His sheepfold, and, consequently, from the seal of the covenant of promise, He would have announced it at the very commencement of His ministry; and, every one

being aware of it, no parent would have had even a thought of bringing a child to be blessed by Him.

Samuel—So, therefore, the silence of the Apostles, and even of the Lord Himself, is, you tell me, in every respect, a demonstration of the fact that I am doubting.

Father—Yes, brother; especially if you compare this silence with another silence of which you no not say anything, but which, nevertheless, also contains a powerful conclusion.

Samuel—Of what would you speak?

Father—Of the absolute silence observed by the Apostles on the baptism of adult disciples *within* the Church.

Samuel—How, my brother! Was it not, on the contrary, the constant practice of John, of the Saviour, and of the Apostles to baptize *adults*?

Father—*Outside* the Church, yes; and it is ours also. But I speak of the interior of the Church—of those who were born in it—of the children of believers—children who, according to you, had not been baptized at their birth, but who, nevertheless, were without doubt baptized some time or other. Now, I ask how it happened that during nearly sixty-seven years, that is to say, from the ministry of John the Baptist until the writings of the Apostles were completed, mention is not made of any baptism having been administered *within* the Church, though she had already found her way into thousands of families.

Samuel—I had not thought of that fact, which I admit seems remarkable to me.

Father—Now, how is it to be explained? It must either be assumed that there had not been any conversions in all these families during three generations, and

that the Church was therefore recruited by strangers only (an idea which is inadmissible), or we must suppose that neither the conversion nor the baptism of the adult sons and daughters of Christians awakened the slightest interest, or made the least impression within the Church or in families; which is contrary to charity as much as to the natural affections;—or else, finally, we must admit that mention is not made of any baptism of adults *within* the Church, because *within* the Church infants were baptized. I cannot see any other possible explanation.

Samuel—I grant that this argument is worthy of serious consideration, and I am far from rejecting it, for it is positive.

Father—The more so (mark this well) that as the question at issue refers to a practice generally diffused through many countries, and amongst disciples jealous for the safe-keeping of the precious truths committed to their care, this universal silence can only be explained by a universal agreement of opinion, which leads us to the conclusion that if the baptism of infant children *within* the Church had not been practised from the very days of the Apostles, that is to say, in conformity to the commission which they had received from the Lord, this custom could never have commenced; it could not have been introduced, nor could it have obtained a footing in the Church without causing disturbances in it, and meeting on all sides the most marked opposition.

Samuel—I have been told, brother, that this practice was unknown in Apostolic times, and that it crept into the Church at a much later period and by insensible degrees. Is this true?

CHAPTER IX.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH ALWAYS BAPTIZED THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS.

Father—What shall I say to you, Samuel! except that to advance such an assertion seems to me either to deny what history affirms, or to be wilfully ignorant of what it relates. For what is more evident than this fact, namely, that the Apostolic Church baptized the children of believers? Therefore, I assure you, that when I hear it said that this proof is doubtful, or that it has no force, I ask, where is the simplicity of those who thus speak.

Samuel—However, dear brother, this proof, whatever it may be, is not in the Word of God.

Father—Undoubtedly it is not; but it is the impress of His Word in the Church. The footmarks that I find imprinted on the dust are not, it is true, the man himself who left them there, but they bear unmistakable testimony of his having passed; and I am sure, dear Samuel, that if we had lost our way in the midst of a desert, you would not refuse to trust yourself to be guided by the traces of a caravan, should you meet with them on the sand. Would you say, in that case, that these traces were of no value in your estimation, inasmuch as you saw neither the camels nor the merchants? I think not. It is the same with regard to the history of the Church, when the matter under consideration is a

custom or a practice. If a doctrine is in question, the law and the testimony are the only voices that ought to be listened to. But if the tangible fact that a doctrine ought to produce be the subject of inquiry, the tangible reply that history gives cannot be objected to, and to reject it is to declare that we *will* retain the opinion which this argument overturns.

Samuel—What you say, my friend, seems to me to admit of no reply. Therefore, although I have until now thought that I ought to disregard the proof which the history of the Church could furnish me with regard to infant baptism, and though I have even blamed those who attached importance to it, I desire now to listen to it. Yes, there are footmarks here, imprinted by truth, and I ought at least to examine them with care.

Father—Well, my friend, view these footmarks from the days of the Apostles downward, in the Church of Antioch, in Syria (Acts, xv). This Church, planted in the midst of the Gentiles, was quite unacquainted with the forms and observances of the law. Now, certain Jews, converted to the Gospel, but still zealous for the customs of the Mosaic law, come to Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas were at the time, and teach the brethren that "except they be circumcised after the manner of Moses they cannot be saved." The Apostles oppose them, and, at a later period, the synod of Jerusalem decides that they are in error. But even this error involves a positive declaration, viz., that the converted Jews knew that the Gentile Church was, as regarded children, constituted like their own. The custom of the law was that the infant should be circumcised—the Jews retained this custom themselves, and wished, under the Gospel, to impose it on the Gentiles. They believed,

then, since they insisted on the keeping up of an ordinance, which specially related to children, that amongst the converted Gentiles, as amongst themselves, the converted Jews, children belonged to the Church. Had children, in the Christian Church, been excluded from the sign of the covenant, would those Jews have had even a thought of preserving a seal which was always placed on the child?

Samuel—Certainly not; and I acknowledge all the simplicity and force of this argument, which the history of the Acts of the Apostles itself furnishes.

Father—Well, all other historical testimony ought, if it is worthy of belief, to be received in the same manner. Therefore, to these first foot-marks join the following—the clearness and depth of which will not leave you any doubt. I shall point them out to you from the days of the Apostles themselves, till the time that everybody acknowledged that infant baptism was the universal custom of the Church.*

Hermas, who was perhaps the person spoken of by St. Paul (Rom. xvi. 14), and who was contemporary with Clement of Rome, of whom mention is made by the same Apostle (Phil. iv. 3), repeating, in some manner, the words of our Lord, that the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children, expresses himself in the following terms:—"Those shall be more honourable [than the martyrs and confessors themselves] who, like little children, have lived without malice. For children were always honoured by the Lord, and have also the highest place in His sight." Would Hermas have spoken in this manner if he had thought that the children of be-

* For the full development of this argument, see Wall's "History of Infant Baptism."

lievers were profane,—excluded from the Church, and so deprived of the invocation of the Almighty's name upon them?

Justin Martyr, a learned and pious man, who lived forty years after the Apostles, and who first pleaded the cause of the Church before the Emperors by whom it was persecuted, expressed himself thus, in a conversation that he had at Ephesus with the Jew Tryphon, a man of learning and noble birth:—"We also, who by Christ have access to God, have received not carnal circumcision, but that which is spiritual, which Henoc and those who resembled him have likewise observed. And as we were born sinners, we have, according to the mercy of God, received it by baptism, as it is permitted to any person whatever to receive it in the same manner." And, in another place, to the question, Why, if circumcision was a good thing, he did not practise it as well as the Jews, he replied—"We Christians are circumcised, in baptism, with the circumcision of Christ." (Col. ii. 11, 12.) (*Dial. Cum. Typh.*, p. 59.) Now, Samuel, will you admit that Justin, a grave and pious man, and profoundly versed in sacred learning, would have compared Christian baptism to circumcision, and replied in these words to a Jew, especially in making mention of original sin, if he *had known* that children were neither baptized nor even admitted as members into the Christian Church? For my own part I cannot even suppose it.

Samuel—Nor indeed can I; and I confess that I did not think that so much weight could attach to this historical truth.

Father—This is yet but a small matter: listen to what follows. This same servant of the Lord Jesus, in one of his Apologies for Christians, expresses himself in

these words:—"Even among us, several men and women of sixty and seventy years of age, *who were made disciples of Christ from their infancy*, continue to live in purity." Now, with regard to this, observe two things; one, that he employs the same word that the Lord Jesus made use of, when he laid his command on the Apostles to preach the Gospel over-the whole world (Mat. xxvii. 19). It is, therefore, incorrect to say, that the expression "make disciples," uttered by the Saviour, is applicable to adults only, since Justin Martyr employs it here in speaking of children. The other circumstance that must be observed is, that those persons who, in Justin Martyr's day, were sixty or seventy years of age, had been born in apostolic times, and had, consequently, during those times, been taken into the Church in infancy. Is not this footmark as distinct as deep? does it not clearly indicate, that in the Church, organized during the time and under the direction of the Apostles, children were looked upon as disciples, that is to say, as members of the Church? But let us pursue our inquiries. About sixty-seven years after the Apostles, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria leave us still more evident footmarks.

Irenaeus, who was likewise a martyr of the faith, and who had been taught by Polycarp the disciple of St. John, in speaking of the Lord Jesus expresses himself thus (*Adv. Heres. Lib. ii. cap. 39.*):—"Therefore, as He was a Master, He had also the age of a Master, not disowning nor disdaining human nature, nor breaking in His own person the law which He had set for mankind; but sanctifying every several age by the likeness that it has to him. For He came to save all persons by Himself: all, I mean, who by Him are regenerated (or baptized) unto

God; infants and little ones, and children and youths, and elder persons. Therefore He went through the several ages: for infants being made an infant, sanctifying in infants: to little ones He was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age."* Thus speaks a doctor of the Church, a witness of the apostolic times, and of the purest discipline in the Church. He declares that even *children at the breast* are in the Church,—that they are made holy or consecrated by the Saviour who had been made a little child for them also; and he likewise declares that these children have been born again to God in the Church, that is to say, according to the form of expression then in use, that they have been *baptized with water*.

Samuel—Is this certain? Did the word *regenerated* then signify *baptized with water*?

Father—Yes, nearly always. For instance, this same Irenaeus says (*Lib. iii., cap. 19*)—"When giving the power of *regeneration in God* to the disciples, the Holy Spirit said 'Go,' " &c.; which, you perceive, can only be understood of the power to baptize, since no Apostle ever possessed that of *regenerating* a soul, which belongs exclusively to the omnipotence of God. And, elsewhere, he again says—"When the Lord gave His disciples the commission to *regenerate in God*, He said to them, 'Go, make disciples of all nations,' " &c. Now, it was the commission to baptize with water that the disciples had received.

* Magister ergo existens Magistri quoque habebat aetatem, non reprobans nec supergrediens hominem, neque solvens (suam) legem in se humani generis: sed omnem aetatem sanctificans per illam quae ad ipsum erat similitudinem. Omnes enim venit per semet ipsum salvare: omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum; infantes et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit aetatem; et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; et parvulis parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes aetatem.

Samuel—If this is so, my brother, it is evident that, in the time of Irenaeus, little children were baptized with water. To deny it would be to reject the fact itself, or else to suppose that this testimony is but nonsense.

Father—Other witnesses still will tell you the same thing. Thus, Clement of Alexandria, who was contemporary with Irenaeus, and who, like him, used indifferently the words *baptism* and *regeneration*, giving directions to the Church on the prudence and modesty that Christians ought to show in the choice of their ornaments, tells them how little becoming it is in them to have idolatrous emblems on their rings and seals, and adds—“Let the impression on your seal be a dove, or a fish, or a vessel under sail, or a harp, or an anchor, and if any of you is a fisherman, let him think of an apostle, and of the infants that he draws from the water.”* Thus indicating that, in his time, the fact of the Apostles having baptized infants was not unknown; and advising the choice of this emblem to a Christian, whose calling led him to spend most of his time on the water.

Samuel—This fact is interesting: there is something very pleasing in its simplicity.

Father—I think so, too. But I come farther down, and I find, about a century after the Apostles, the testimony of Tertullian, which I produce with so much

* Some of the expressions in these quotations from the fathers betray bad taste, and, some of them, indifferent theology; but they are not on that account of less weight as arguments for the antiquity of the practice of infant baptism. And it is for that purpose only that they are quoted here. Were they even more objectionable than they are, their testimony on this point would not be in the least impaired. It is plain from what immediately follows, that Dr. Malan is not to be held responsible for any of the *sentiments* contained in any of the quotations; much less is the translator or editor.—K. J. B.

the more satisfaction, as it is made use of to combat the very truth it establishes. The following are the facts:—In his work on “Baptism and the Soul,” after having spoken of the natural sinfulness of man, and the necessity for regeneration, he advances the opinion, that the baptism of water takes away all the sins that have preceded it, from which he concludes that it would be much better, in place of baptizing in infancy, to defer that ordinance to a more advanced period of life. “For instance,” he says, “until after marriage, that, the age of passion being passed, the baptized person may no longer run any risk of losing the benefits to be derived from baptism.” Such was his opinion; but what do we learn from it with regard to infant baptism? Does it imply the non-existence of this usage in his time? On the contrary, it establishes the fact that infant baptism was the ordinary practice of the Church at that period. Again: does his opinion prove that this practice was contrary to Scripture, and that baptism ought only to follow faith? Not at all: it is a totally different reason that he assigns for his notion of exclusive adult baptism. Tertullian then unites with Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria in testifying that the practice of the Apostolic Church was to put the seal of the covenant on children born within the Church. Do you doubt this, Samuel?

Samuel—It does not seem to me that such testimony could reasonably be rejected.

Father—Other servants of God, besides those already mentioned, will also assure you of it. About one hundred and ten years after the Apostles, Origen, one of the most learned Fathers of the Church, expresses himself in this manner (*Hom. viii. in Levit. cap. 12*)—“No man

is exempt from natural pollution, even though the duration of his life has been but a single day. Let it therefore be noticed particularly, that the baptism of the Church is given for the remission of sins. Infants also are, according to the custom of the Church, baptized—a grace which would be useless to them if there was nothing in them which had need of pardon and mercy.” Elsewhere he says (*Hom. in Lucam, cap. 14*)—“Since I have the opportunity of doing so, I shall again speak on a question which is often agitated amongst the brethren. It is said that little children are baptized for the remission of sins. Of what sins? When did they sin? But what other fitting reason would there be for the baptism of infants except that which I have produced—namely, that man, at the age even of but one day, is not without pollution.” And, in another place, he again says (*Comment. in Epist. ad Rom, Lib. v.*)—“Under the law a sacrifice of turtle doves and young pigeons was to be offered for the sins of every child that was born. And it is for this reason that the Church has received from the Apostles the custom of baptizing even infants. For those to whom the secrets of the mysteries of God were intrusted, knew that all men have in them the original pollution of sin, which is to be taken away by water and by the Spirit.” So spoke this Christian, born of a father who was a Christian and a martyr, and descended from ancestors equally faithful. He had then been baptized in infancy himself, for if he had not, he would not have insisted on this fact; and if this practice had not been that of the Church from its very origin, would a man so enlightened as he was, have affirmed what history, as well as the experience of his own family, would have contradicted?

Samuel—It would be foolish to suppose it. The evidence seems to me more than complete.

Father—What do we also see in a very large and very faithful Church, about fifty years after Origen? What took place in the Church of Africa on the subject of infant baptism? About the year of our Lord, 250, there was a council held, consisting of sixty-six bishops. At this council, Fudus, another bishop of the same Church, inquired, by letter, "if an infant could be baptized before he was eight days old, in a case that appeared urgent." Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and also a martyr, replied, in the name of the whole council, by a long letter, going fully into details; in which, after having said that in the Church the grace of God belongs to every person and to every age, he remarked that, "if under the Jewish law, the child ought not to be circumcised until the eighth day, this (eighth) day, which was the first after the Sabbath, was, for the Christian, the first day of the week—the day on which the Lord arose from the dead; that, therefore, the infant, even but one day old, ought to be a sharer in the benefit of that resurrection. For which reason, *spiritual circumcision* (that is to say, *baptism*,) could not be delayed by the fact of carnal circumcision, which was the shadow to which the light has succeeded; so much the more, added he, that Peter declares, in the Acts, that the Lord had forbidden him to regard any human being as unclean. Why, then, should we regard little children as unclean? For all these reasons, my dear brother, the opinion of our council is, that we should not exclude any one from the ordinance of baptism. And, since it ought to be observed towards all men, we consider that it ought still more to be observed as regards children newly born,

who have so much the more need of our assistance and of God's, because, at the time of their birth, they can only implore it by their tears and groanings."*

Samuel—Ah! brother, allow me to tell you what a difference, what a contrast I see, between the sentiments of the council of Carthage and those of—our Baptist brethren, and of my own heart, with regard to baptism. How different the manner of considering it! What a contemplation of the sovereignty and benefit of the divine ordinance amongst these first bishops of the Church! Truly, dear friend, I ask myself if my faith be indeed the faith that they possessed, since I have so little understood the ordinance of God as they understood it.

Father—Really, Samuel, the views of Baptists are very different from those of this council. And yet, of what men was it composed! What a servant of Jesus! what a learned man! what a confessor to the truth was this Cyprian who presided in it!

Samuel—It is that which now strikes me. For, in short, we must either admit that our Baptist brethren have more knowledge, more faith, more integrity and true piety than the leaders of the Church had in those early times, or else confess that an opinion, which is so distinctly opposed to that of these ancient bishops and doctors, is certainly new in the Church, and very probably erroneous.

Father—So much the more, you perceive, that they put forward, not an opinion peculiar to any sect, but

* See note in page 89. Here, however, Dr. Malan seems to sympathise too much with some questionable notions involved in the passage he quotes. Still, the force of the evidence here produced for the antiquity of infant baptism (which is the single point we are at present concerned with), is not affected by this.

that which was certainly the universal sentiment of the Church at that time. And see how different their view of the subject was from that which you have to-day expressed! See what they thought of circumcision, which they likened so much to the baptism of water that they called the latter *spiritual circumcision*. See, also, what they understood by the purity of the child of which St. Peter had spoken. This purity, as you have understood it, has induced you to confound your child with a heathen child, and to refuse him the ordinance of baptism; and it was this same purity that rather pleaded in the spirit of faith with these sixty-six bishops in favour of the baptism of a child, though born but a single day! Finally, see how much compassion they felt for the little child; a compassion founded on the belief that the divine ordinance is a boon from God to him. You, on the contrary, regarding the ordinance as of no value in itself, and thus depriving it of its character of sovereign grace, withhold it from the infant, whom you thus leave in a condition which was regarded by the council as the privation of a great benefit, and, at the same time, as a slighting of the divine compassion.

Samuel—I see it and I feel it, dear friend. Certainly the opinion of the Baptists of our day is in direct opposition to that of Cyprian and his colleagues; and I feel that I dare neither prefer my own nor that of any person whatever to theirs.

Father—You would not, then, any longer maintain, or even suppose, that the Apostolic Church knew nothing of the practice of infant baptism.

Samuel—Should not I be void of sense if I still thought so? Is there cause here for any uncertainty?

The Scripture says that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." How, then, could I regard it as doubtful?

Father—Yet listen to some more of these witnesses, if not to establish the fact still better, at least to be edified by their veneration for the ordinance of God.

Samuel—Yes, I shall be glad to hear anything with such a tendency. I feel that my faith has need of it; for indeed I feel that I have treated too lightly a subject of so much importance.

Father—Well, then, two hundred and sixty years after the Apostles, Gregory of Nazianzus, in speaking of Basil, a faithful and courageous confessor of the truth, compares him to Samuel, and says that, "Like the son of Hannah, he had been consecrated to God from his infancy—from his mother's womb, and like him had been brought to the temple to be anointed of the Lord." Then addressing himself to a Christian mother, he says to her:—"Hast thou a little child? let not corruption take occasion from the circumstance of his weakness, but let him be consecrated from his very cradle. Yes! let him be henceforth set apart as a subject for the operation of the Holy Spirit! Thou, as a weak mother, art fearful and of little faith, and darest giving him this seal on account of his tender age. Hannah devoted Samuel to God before he was born, and as soon as he was born, not frightened by the weakness of humanity, but trusting in God, she brought him to the temple in the priestly vestments. And thou, hast thou need of amulets and charms to guard the child! Give him the Trinity, that great and excellent preservative."

Samuel—Oh! my brother, how delightful these words, "Give him the Trinity" for guardian! How much beauty

is contained in them ! What faith ! what an out-going of his soul towards the Almighty, whose great name will serve as a safeguard to the child on whom it is invoked.

Father—Yes, dear Samuel, these are noble, fine sentiments. They were those of the martyrs of the Gospel. What a contrast (as you have said) with the dryness of our modern sentiments !

Samuel—I now also perceive that these were not the opinions of one or two doctors in the Church.

Father—They were, *without exception*, those of the entire Church. You have seen this in the first three centuries ; you shall see it in the fourth and fifth likewise.

In the middle of the fourth century, Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, expresses himself thus, (*Comment. lib. i. in Lucam cap. 1*):—"Perhaps the miracle of Elijah separating the waters of Jordan, represented the future mysteries of this salutary baptism, by which, even at their first entrance into the human nature, children are cleansed from their pollution."

Three hundred and eighty years after the Apostles, Chrysostom, the eloquent and courageous Bishop of Constantinople, comparing circumcision with baptism, expresses himself thus :—"But our circumcision, I mean the grace of baptism, brings the remedy without any pain, becomes for us the source of an infinity of benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Holy Spirit. It does not relate to any assigned period, as circumcision did, but suits equally the commencement and the middle of life—the aged man also, may receive this circumcision made without hands." And in another place (*Hom. xii in i. epist. ad Cor.*), censuring those mothers who thought

to preserve their newly born children from the power of the demon by anointing their heads with a certain plaster, he says to them :—"How does she, who puts this vile dirt on her infant, dare to place him in the hands of the pastor? Tell me, do you think it fitting that the pastor's hands should place this seal on the forehead of the child, when you have first covered it with this dirt?"

Samuel—Enough, my brother. Do not fatigue yourself producing a greater number of proofs.

Father—Just one more, if you please, which will appear to you the more pointed, as it is given, not by a faithful servant of Jesus, but by an enemy of the truth—the heretic Pelagius. This man, a monk of Great Britain, of which he was a native, after having visited the churches of different countries, went to Rome, and thence to Africa, where he taught the doctrine that has since received his name: that is to say, that man at his birth is pure, and that he is afterwards capable in himself of attaining unto perfection. The Church opposed this doctrine, and the universal Council of Carthage in particular rejected it as heretical. At this Council the pious Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was present. Augustine then wrote against Pelagius, to whose testimony he appealed as to the fact of infant baptism, on which he (Augustine) thus speaks :—"Now, therefore, since our opponents acknowledge that children ought to be baptized, seeing that, on that subject, it is impossible for them to combat the authority of the universal Church, which evidently received that institution from the Lord and His Apostles, they must also acknowledge that children have need of a Mediator, and that, in this sacrament, they are presented to the love of the faithful,

that they may be received into the body of Christ." And as to the practice of infant baptism, he says—"We might ask this learned man how many Latin and Greek authors, versed in the interpretation of the Scriptures, there are, who have, since the foundation of the Christian Church held other views on this subject, or received other views from those who lived before them. For myself (I, however, admit that I have not read so much as Pelagius), I cannot remember of having heard a different view expressed by any Christian (who received the books of both the Old and New Testaments) either in the universal Church, or in any heretical or schismatical Church, that ever existed."

Samuel—What a declaration! made by such a doctor as Augustine, and publicly before the Church! Indeed, my friend, how can it be that men of learning and integrity still say that children were not baptized in the Apostolic Church?

Father—I, too, am unable to comprehend it; certainly Pelagius, who had a great interest in denying that children had always been baptized, far from doing so, declares that "he had never heard that even any impious heretic had ever advanced the opinion that children ought not to be baptized," and he adds, "who could be impious enough to refuse baptism to children!"

Samuel—*Impious enough!* The Church of that period, that is to say, the Apostolic Church, would then have taxed me, who have withheld this ordinance from my child, with ungodliness? Ah! my friend, this is serious.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHILDREN OF UNBELIEVING PARENTS HAVE NO RIGHT
TO THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.*

Father—You then acknowledge, Samuel, that *in the Church* the children of believing parents ought to be baptized?

Samuel—How not do so, without overlooking the sovereignty of God in this ordinance, and, at the same time, the condition of the children of believers from the commencement of the world, in the families of the patriarchs, afterwards under the shadows of the law, and, finally, under the economy of the Gospel? And yet, notwithstanding the evidence that I now possess, my mind is not satisfied. I see the abuse of this practice, the snare that it lays for the multitude, who call themselves Christians and whom it perhaps keeps back from thorough conversion, and from the desire of being baptized by the Spirit. I will even go so far as to say, that it is possible that my refusal to have my child baptized may become a salutary warning both to himself and many other souls.

* In order to understand some portions of this chapter it is necessary to remember that Malan and those who were associated with him in the great revival of religion which took place in Geneva somewhere about fifty years ago, experienced much persecution from the civil authorities of the Republic at the instigation of the clergy of the National Churches.

Father—How you reason, dear Samuel! What confusion of views and doctrines in those few words! What forgetfulness of the first principles of the Gospel! Truly, my friend, “I marvel” (Gal. i. 6) that you are still in darkness.

Samuel—I, at least, do not perceive it, dear brother, and if you can, have the goodness to teach me; for I assure you I have no other wish than to know what God says and commands.

Father—First, how can you, a disciple of the Bible, advance this principle, that the abuse of an ordinance ought to cause its suppression? According to this, circumcision amongst the Jews ought also to have been put off to a more advanced age, or even abolished, on account of its abuse by the multitude; or believers, at the very least, ought to have wished that their children would not be circumcised in infancy, in order that they might receive a salutary warning from this ordinance!

Samuel—I see it. I have spoken according to the carnal judgment and circumscribed view of man. No; man’s abuse of any of God’s ordinances can never throw blame on the divine institution itself.

Father—Certainly not; for, apply the principle that you have advanced to the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. Is not this ordinance a blessing, a great consolation, a renewal of life for the faithful Church of Jesus? And yet, how much it is abused in the world called Christian! What a number of ignorant, carnal, superstitious people who only see in it a ceremony, who change it into a work of righteousness, and who imagine that they belong to Christ because they partake of it! And how many abuses also of this sacrament amongst those who administer it, and who, comprehending neither its nature

nor its object, prostitute it to the world—to the profane and ungodly; and who, even by this ordinance, lay a snare in the path of a deceived multitude! Will you, on account of all these abuses, say that it ought to be abolished? Will you not say rather, that believers ought to observe it in the way appointed by God?

Samuel—Ah, well! that is all I ask—namely, that believers make the use of baptism that the Lord has commanded.

Father—Well, brother; but I must ask you to grant me, that, to bring an ordinance back to its primitive institution, is quite a different matter from saying that it ought to be abolished, on account of the way in which it has been abused.

Samuel—Yes, certainly, I grant you that; but then, what is to be done that baptism may be brought back to its primitive institution?

Father—Ah! my friend, there is much to be done. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are two pearls that the unbelief of our evil days, without scruple, throws to the unclean, who despise and trample them underfoot, and furiously attack even the Church, that has abandoned these precious things to them. How desirable, then, is it that these two jewels of the spouse of Christ should be recovered from the hands of her enemies, and that they should only be employed, according to the will of God, in adorning the Church for her husband.

Samuel—But, how is that to be done, how prevent this confusion, this adultery of the Church of Jesus with His enemies, so long as the baptism of water is administered to every child born in a country called Christian? Where here is the middle course (between baptizing

all born in a Christian country, and those only who make a profession of faith)?

Father—The middle course is just the ordinance, as God Himself instituted it at the first. Undoubtedly, so early as the time of Seth, every infant that was born had not the Almighty's name formally named upon him; for the irreligious Cainite, who despised it, took good care not to invoke it on his offspring. Neither was it marked upon the posterity of Ham, on whom the curse of the Lord was laid; and at a later period, under the discipline of the law, the family, whose father had, in consequence of his impiety, been cut off from the people of Israel and from the covenant of the Lord, did not possess this privilege.

Why, then, does not that take place under the light of the Gospel, which was practised when the truth was yet but as "a lamp that shineth in a dark place?" Why are not unbelievers, in our days also, kept back from the privileges and rights of the covenant, as was the case in ancient times with those who were ungodly, profane, and despisers of the word of the Most High.

Samuel—You do not think, then, that every child, born in a nation called Christian, has a right to the ordinance of baptism?

Father—I believe that the seal of the covenant of promise belongs to the children of parents who are under the promise; but I cannot see, in any part of God's Book, or in any example drawn from the pure Church of the Lord, that this seal ought to be put, *as by the authority of the Almighty*, on the children of those who are in rebellion against Him. And so far am I from thinking that the birth of a child in a country, or under a

government, nominally Christian, is a Scriptural reason for baptizing him in the name of the Lord, that, on the contrary, I consider this practice as the work of the adversary, who, by this confusion, retains the world in a fatal illusion, and unites "the sons of God with the daughters of men;" marriages from which spring men noted for pride and impiety. (Gen. vi. 1-5.)

Samuel—But is not that what I have myself said; for which, however, you have blamed me?

Father—Ah! no, my dear friend: you say that we should only baptize believing adults, seeing that if we baptize children, then everybody will be baptized, and the Church and the world will consequently be confounded together. But I say, let us baptize children, for, since they are holy, God has commanded it; but let us baptize them according to His appointment. My opinion is therefore different from yours.

Samuel—I see it now; but it still remains for me to ask what you mean by "*baptizing children according to the ordinance of God*?"

Father—It is to put the name of the Almighty on the children of those who themselves call upon and invoke Him—to baptize the families of believers, and them only.

Samuel—Ah! my friend, what light is thrown into my mind by that word! How entirely new the idea that it suggests, and of which I had not even thought! Have the goodness to explain to me your sentiments on this point.

Father—It was the mingling of God's children with the wicked that caused the corruption of the antediluvian world. It is this mixture which prevails in the present day, and which constitutes what are commonly

called the *National Churches*,* that is to say, those cosmo-Christian associations (which means composed of the world in part, and in part of Christians) in which the Bible, its precepts and ordinances, are indeed to be found, but in which the ordinances of worship, placed under the guardianship, or even under the control, of worldly powers, are forcibly turned away from their primitive institution, and become, in the hands of an unbelieving power, either a sign of agreement between different peoples, or else a useful means of restraining and governing a nation. This may certainly be modified, if the government itself be in subjection to the Lord Jesus; but there is no doubt that when this, which is very unusual, does not happen to be the case, and when the heads of a nation are mere children of this world, the ordinances of the Lord are prostituted to the world, and the spouse of Christ, placed in captivity, appears no more, save in soiled vestments and bereft of her crown. The Lord's Supper, that holy institution of the Saviour for His beloved Church, is then thrown, like vile provender, to the very dogs and swine of the most perverse generation; and Baptism is, by a necessary consequence, administered in the families of those who mock Jesus, His cross, and His blood, and who go so far as to say that when the body dies all dies.

Samuel—What a picture! and how true! But, once again, what remedy is to be applied to this, if infants are to be baptized?

* It is to be deeply deplored that the same unholy mixture obtains to a large extent in some of the non-established Churches. The late venerable Dr. Wardlaw spoke of the indiscriminate admission of all sorts of persons to the sealing ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as, at present, the great sin and danger of the British Churches.

Father—The remedy lies in the faithfulness, earnestness, and courage of the ministers of God. If they are themselves worldly people, "men who have not the spirit," servants whom the Lord calls "hirelings;"—or again, if, being Christians, they are weak and timid, and limit themselves to sighing and lamenting over abuses without daring to struggle against them and leave them off;—if, I say, the leaders of the Church are such, all its members are likely to continue in the same state in which the hearts of these pastors are, that is to say, in corruption or slavery. For assuredly, it will not be the government of the world that will demand reform in the Church, that will cry out when the ordinances of God are degraded, that will make known to the sons of Seth that their duty is to separate themselves from the Cainites. Its own interest is involved in the continuation and complication of this confusion, and it will take good care not to put an end to it.

Samuel—Well, then, what ought faithful ministers to do?

Father—What their Lord desires them; that is to say, let them administer the ordinances of God in the Church and for the Church, not in the world and for the world. Let them, accordingly, baptize in the name of the Lord none but the children of those who declare that they belong to Him. Afterwards, let these same ministers who, on the part of the Lord Jesus, are appointed bishops, that is to say, overseers of the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood (Acts xx. 28), not give the repast of the Lord's Supper to those whom they have thus baptized, until, being first capable of examining themselves (1 Cor. xi. 28; 2 Cor. xiii. 5), they make a full confession of their submission to the Word of the

Lord and their love for the Saviour. Such is certainly the divine law, both with regard to children and with regard to the ordinances of the Church.

Samuel—I understand you. According to your opinion, the Christian Church is composed of families, and not of individuals picked out, if I may use the expression; and this Church is separated from the world and purified by the right administration, first, of baptism, and afterwards of the Lord's Supper.

Father—This appears to me clearly taught in Scripture; and any other mode of constituting a Church seems to be the invention of man, but in nowise the institution of God. It is in this manner, I think, that the Church named by the name of the Almighty is truly separated from the world and its darkness. This is the salutary warning which you wanted to be at;* and it consists, not in refusing to the child of a believer the seal of consecration that belongs to him, but in withholding that seal from the children of unbelievers. This the opposite of what Baptists believe, and it is at the same time what is practised by Churches in connexion with the world.

Samuel—I perceive, if you are not a Baptist, you are not more favourable to the cosmo-Christian confusion, as you call it, which Baptists wish to avoid.

Father—No; this confusion cannot be approved, at least by those who know Jesus and His Spirit. But how shall it be exposed and reproved, and order established in its place, if not by the faithfulness of the "stewards of the mysteries of God?" (1 Cor. iv. 1.) and how shall they do this more efficaciously than by declaring that

* See the beginning of the chapter, end of SAMUEL's first speech.

they will not invoke the name of the Almighty except on the children of those who have submitted themselves to Him; and in fearlessly refusing to do so, when an irreligious man, whatever his rank or power may be, presents his child for an ordinance which he himself tramples under foot.

For, I would ask you, Samuel, when the minister of the Lord Jesus, showing himself thus faithful, and, if I may say so, unconquerable, in the administration of his charge, shall be as that Ambrose of whom I have spoken to you was, when he refused the Emperor Theodosious admission into the Church, and subjected him to a public penance; when, I say, the minister of God shall have made this declaration (that he will not baptize the children of the ungodly) even to the most considerable men of the place, and perhaps to the very chiefs of the nation,—and when he shall have kept the good charge in spite of the murmurs of the unbelieving, the profane, or the impious—will not the spouse of Christ be then more honourable and more happy, and occupy the only place that is meet for her—that which keeps her separate from the world and from its defilement?

Samuel—It is, then, I see, to the faithful administration of baptism, that you look, in the first place, for the separation of God's people from unbelievers.

Father—The Church of Christ, says an Apostle (Phil. ii. 15), ought to be seen in the midst of the darkness of this world, like a torch in a dark night. There is no need to ask where this torch is to be found; its brightness indicates that sufficiently. The opinion, that the separation of the Church from the world ought only to be internal and spiritual, and that there ought not, therefore, to be any visible contrast between it and the

multitude, is without doubt very accommodating to the lusts of the flesh, but it is as false as fatal, and all the arguments which can be heaped together to legitimize this union of the spouse of Christ with the world, seem to me but the excuses of timidity or weakness.

Samuel—You will, however, be told that the Jewish nation was so constituted.

Father—Very well! it will be replied, Restore to us what the people of Israel possessed. Place around us the wall of the Levitical ordinances, and commit to us only the oracles of God; then, after having sealed each subject of this covenant with the name of the Almighty, cut off the ungodly man with his race from amongst us. But let us not compare the political institutions of our days with those of the Hebrews; and, above all, let us not say that the Church of Christ ought to unite herself to a civil power that hates her; let us not say that she ought to do this, because under the law the Church and State were but one and the same institution, having but one and the same code, which was the Word of God.

Samuel—That is to say, as I have said, you no more approve of a *National* than of a *Baptist Church*.

Father—They seem to me to be the two extremes of opposition to what existed in the Christian Church at its commencement, and to what is written in God's Word.

I certainly believe that the Church of Christ is national in this sense, that it receives and brings together families, and extends over all classes of society. So that there is nothing in its nature to prevent it, in any country or at any epoch, from collecting an entire population, governors and governed, and from being in this way a

people, a nation. But as to the converse opinion, namely, that a nation of the world, because the Book of God and His worship are found in the midst of it, is, by virtue of that very fact, the Church of God—that, consequently, its government that of the Church also—that, by order of this government, every child, born a citizen of this nation, is by right of birth a member of the Church,—this opinion I believe to be as false as it is perilous, and doubt not that it proceeds from the dominion that things visible have gained over those that are invisible, and very probably from this, “that the daughters of men are fair in the eyes of the children of God.”

On the other hand, the Baptist Church, terrified by this national confusion, has withdrawn to the farthest possible distance from it, and, in order not to put the seal of the divine covenant on the child of the mere citizen, has resolved to put it only on the believer already separated from the world by his own conscious act. It seems to me that, in having acted thus, the Baptist Church has completely mistaken the means she ought to have used to guard from abuse the ordinances, of God, and to separate His children from the children of men. No: it was not by depriving the offspring of the believer of the benefit that belongs to them, that this holy separation ought to have been effected; but it was by not granting it to any save the children whose right it was (in right of their godly parents).

Samuel—So, therefore, as you have said, everything depends on the faithfulness of the ministers of God's Word.

Father—That is what I think. The world will never be the Church, nor “the little flock the multitude.” Let a faithful pastor be deeply impressed with this truth,

and let him act accordingly, and his example will very soon be followed by another faithful minister, and by degrees the good will be done. Let this pastor, then, before baptizing an infant, have one or several conversations with the parents, and let him assure himself that it is really to a Saviour whom they know that they are going to present their son or daughter. After having himself instructed the children of his flock, let him not admit any to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper except those who give evidence of faith. Let this be done, dear Samuel, and soon the Church, separated from the world by the right use of its ordinances, shall no longer be confounded with the unbelieving multitude, though Baptist Churches should have come to an end. For there were none of them in the days of the Apostles, nor was there during that period any connexion between the Church and the government of that age.

Samuel—The summary of your belief, then, is, that the children of believers ought to be baptized, but no others; and that if they are not baptized the divine institution is not fully attended to.

Father—I would add, that children are, at the same time, deprived of the Gospel education that they ought to receive.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHILD OF A BAPTIST CANNOT BE BROUGHT UP UNDER
THE PROMISE OF GRACE.

Samuel—What do you mean, my dear brother? In what respect, pray, should I be prevented from rearing my son under the Gospel of Grace?

Father—Ah! dear brother, I would, in my turn, ask you how you would rear, as *consecrated to God*, the child whom you do not look upon as consecrated?

Samuel—But, . . . I have already told you . . .

Father—That *you* have consecrated him:—is not that it? that *you* have dedicated or presented him to the Lord? But I have replied to you, and, I think, according to Scripture, that if God Himself does not consecrate, man will certainly not do what He has not done. As to your son, he is either included with you in the Gospel promise, or else he is not; and if he is not, how rear him in the kingdom of the promise?

Samuel—Ah! how much I should wish to understand this clearly! For certainly I feel that on this subject I do not see things . . . Shall I say it? . . . perhaps in so solemn a light as you see them.

Father—Very well! Suppose (that I may make myself better understood) that the elect angels in heaven had children as we have, and that, in the sight of God, a pure race had thus sprung from sinless parents. What would these children appear to you to be at their birth?

Samuel—Holy, and without spot.

Father—And are they also consecrated to God ?

Samuel—Uudoubtedly, for they are created by Him, in His light, and under His eye, which is on them as on their parents.

Father—Now, suppose, also, that these children are to be reared for God, and tell me what motive their parents will employ to teach them.

Samuel—I conceive that they will say to their children, you are children blessed of God, live, therefore, for Him.

Father—And do you think that this motive could also be employed if those children were not blessed of God ?

Samuel—Certainly not; thus Satan, for instance, if he had a family, could not make use of the same motive with his children.

Father—What motive, then, could he employ ?

Samuel—None, I think, but the dread of God and His judgments; and his language to them would be, "Obey lest ye be punished."

Father—Well, my dear brother, apply what you have just said to your own child, and you will first grant that, if it would be a blessing and a joy to the angels in heaven to have but one and the same God with their children, and to be thus united to their families by the same bond of grace, it ought to be on earth a cause of grief, at least to Christian parents, not to have this bond of union with their children.

Samuel—But have I not this bond of union with my son ?

Father—Not if you are a Baptist. For according to Baptist views, your infant is but as the infant of a heathen—he is pure in the same sense in which a

heathen child is pure, and does not, in God's sight, possess any advantage over the child of an idolater. Now, as you cannot say that you have the same God as the child of an idolater, neither can you say that you have the same God as your own child; you are therefore in this very differently situated from what, according to my supposition, an angel would be; . . . and also, dear brother, very differently from a pious father under the shadows of the law; and in this, I assure you, I pity you very much.

Samuel—But, again, brother, what a view you take of things! how can you compare the child of an idolater with a Christian's child, for whom so many prayers are daily offered, and who, from his cradle, is to hear nothing but the name and Word of the Saviour?

Father—I am speaking only of a fact; and I say that if you, brother, only regard your child as a heathen child, you cannot say that you are united to him by any spiritual tie, seeing that your God is not his God.

Samuel—Not his God! How positive you are in your conclusion!

Father—I judge not of these things, my dear friend, according to my own imagination, but by ranging myself on "the side of God, and trembling at His Word." No, Samuel, I do not wish to destroy what the Almighty has instituted, nor, by an earthly meaning and a carnal wisdom, to efface the virtue of the divine consecration by saying, what will be the result to my child, whether the Lord's name be invoked over him or not;—whether he be a member of the flock that follows Jesus or not. Such language is that of the flesh and its ignorance; but the Holy Spirit does not thus speak, for it declares that he on whom the Almighty has placed the seal of

His name, is holy to Him ; and for my part, Samuel, I desire to hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Samuel—You are grave, my dear brother, and I feel I ought likewise to be so. I wish, then, like you, to judge of these things, "by placing myself on God's side," and I perceive that, in this respect, it is possible that the unbelief of the age in which we live, perhaps, also, my own want of reflection on the majesty of the ordinance of God, have had some influence on my faith ; and that I have neither seen all the glory of the seal of the covenant nor all the benefits which that seal implies.

Father—Ah ! brother, I think that in reality we are very far from believing the divine ordinances to be all that they are ; and I doubt not that if an Irenaeus or Cyprian were to re-appear in our days, he would be astonished at the want of feeling in our Churches, in which all is weighed in the balance of the human understanding, and in which people are more ready to ask of what use the name of God will be to a child than they are to rejoice in placing it upon Him.

Samuel—So, then, you believe that, in withholding baptism from my child, I have acted as if I declared that the Almighty is not his God.

Father—I certainly believe so ; persuaded as I am, that neither the family of Seth, nor that of Shem, nor that of Abraham, nor that of any of the faithful Jews, was more blessed of God than is the family of the Christian. Now, in these families, if an infant had been deprived of the invocation of the name of God upon him, it would have been regarded as a great misfortune for that infant. I therefore likewise believe that it would be a great misfortune for my family if my children were cast out from this solemn invocation. I desire, if God

honours me thus, that my children should already possess on earth the blessing that the children of angels would have in heaven, if angels had children.

Samuel—To that I will answer, Amen! Such is also my dearest wish with regard to my son, though I did not think I ought to get him baptized.

Father—But, dear Samuel, on what foundation do you think to raise this edifice? What will be the principle of this bringing up, and what motive will you present to your son to engage him to submit to God? Will it be the law, or grace?

Samuel—I do not clearly comprehend the meaning of your question.

Father—I will explain myself, then. There are, it seems to me, two principles of religious education (for I put entirely from us the principle of honour or emulation which is acted upon in worldly education), and these principles are the law and grace.

The first says to the child, "Don't do this, for fear of punishment from God;" or, "Do this, that you may be rewarded." The second, on the contrary, says, "Do not that, because you are consecrated;" or, "Do this, that you may please God, who loves you."

Now, if a child is considered as being "out of Christ," he is by that very circumstance regarded as being under the law, outside the fold of the Good Shepherd, and far from His words of love. The father must therefore say to this child (who is not holy to God, and on whom the Saviour's name is not named), Sin not least you be accursed. And so the whole course of this education will be determined by the "commandment that is unto death."

Such was, without doubt, the education of the children

of the Jews, in those families that did not understand God's grace; and such is also that which *Christian* parents (so called), who are not taught by the Spirit, give in the present day to their children.

But if, on the contrary, my child is, according to the favour and appointment of God, consecrated to Him, and if the holy name of the Lord is thus called upon him, this child, who is "in Christ," and in His sheepfold as one of the lambs of the Good Shepherd, will be instructed and guided as one entitled to this great privilege, and as one included in this great blessing. You have seen the liberated infants of the slave family, and they bear the visible sign of their liberty. It will therefore be as free, and no longer as slaves, that they will be brought up, and on this principle all their education will be founded. "Do that no more," they will be told, "for that would be to act as slaves." "Do this," it will be again said to them, "for you are free, and it is your privilege."

In like manner, I say to my child, who has my God for his God also and who bears the sacred seal of the Lord's name upon him, "Do not that, for you are under the eyes of *our* gracious God, whose great name is called upon you. Respect yourself, my child, and flee from everything wicked, for you are holy to the Lord. Listen to the voice of the Saviour, for He has taken you in His arms, and it is in His sheepfold that you are kept and fed." And my child, who is also consecrated, and to whose memory this character, which comes to him through the mercy of God, is each day recalled, in this manner hears every day the voice of the promise of grace in Christ, and, far from taking advantage of this holy privilege to turn aside from wisdom, he experiences

the blessed influence of the name of *his* God; is accustomed to consider himself as consecrated to the Almighty, and at the same time forms the habit of believing and holding fast the doctrine of love that has been taught him.

This, dear Samuel, is what Christian education ought to be. Now, how, I pray you, will it be possible to bring up in this manner a child who, degraded to the spiritual condition of a heathen's child, will not know what it is to be consecrated to God, since he will never be told that he is consecrated.

Samuel—What you have just said interests me very much, I assure you; but yet, I know a Baptist family, the children of which have all been reared precisely according to the principles of grace that you have just expounded.

Father—If the parents had been Baptists *in their consciences*, that, you will perceive, would not have been possible, seeing that, according to their belief, not regarding their children as consecrated *by* the Almighty, and thus putting them in the same position as the children of unbelievers and heathens, they could not have engaged them to reverence and love Him, by this motive, that they bear the seal of the covenant. But I thank God, whose pity for children extends far beyond the opinion and errors of their parents, there are many and happy inconsistencies amongst the generality of Baptist parents, whose hearts and practice belie, in the education of their children, the system which, in words, they sometimes resolutely defend.

And yet, even then, never will the infant who has not been sealed with the name of the Almighty, on the part of the Almighty, and who does not consequently con-

sider himself as consecrated to Him,—no, never will this child be guided in his heart by the same principle as the child who says in his soul that he ought to avoid the evil and cleave to the good, because the Almighty—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is his God, because he is sealed, on the part of God, and according to His promise of grace, to belong to and obey Him.

Samuel—What you say, brother, appears to me to be the truth, and renders me very serious. For in short, either it is necessary, . . . if I be a Baptist, that, being consistent with myself, and in my conscience regarding my child as nothing more than the child of a heathen, I rear him as such, and under the law, by proclaiming the Saviour to him as I would to the son of a Turk; or else it is necessary that, in bringing him up in the Church, according to the Gospel, and, if I may say so, on the knees of the Saviour, I do in practice what I deny by words, which is an untruth. Now, I confess that if it would be impossible for me to speak of the Almighty to my child otherwise than by calling Him *our* God, *our* Father, *our* Saviour, which I, however, cannot do if I do not in my soul, and according to Scripture, believe that my God is also his God. . . . My system must, therefore, in this, as you, my dear brother, have said, be contradicted by my Christian feeling; and . . . I sincerely confess to you that my feelings appear to be much more in accordance with the will and grace of God than my belief, or rather prejudice, has until now been.

Father—Take care, however, Samuel, lest a feeling, a bias of the mind should prevail over the TRUTH. Therefore, in this let the father silence his affections, and let the Christian listen to that alone which his God com-

mands ; for what profit would accrue to man from being taught merely by man, or by the emotions of the flesh ? Keep a watch, therefore, upon the inclinations of your heart, and, on this point, be taught only by the Word of God.

Samuel—Amen ! May the Lord, whom I desire to honour in all my ways, put His lamp before my steps, and Himself show me His paths ! But, good friend has He not this day done so ? Was it not He Himself who, in His goodness, caused me to understand all that you have been so kind as to explain to me on the sovereign majesty of the ordinance of baptism,—on the position of the children of believers in the primeval Church, and afterwards under the Levitical law,—on the character, always the same, of the promise, which does not, under the Gospel, abolish what it had done before it,—on the true meaning of the mission of the Apostles as to baptism,—on the families that were baptized,—on the uniform and constant practice of the Apostolic Church,—on the administration of baptism to the children of believers only,—and, finally, on the consequences of baptism in the bringing up of children ? Is not this instruction that you have given me, with so many details, the answer of the Lord to this prayer, which I have more than once presented to Him : “ Oh my God ! if I am in error, show it to me, and bring me out of it by Thy Word.”

Father—Wisdom, my brother, will be justified of her children. If what I have at this time said to you is of God, may He bless it to your soul ! and if in anything I have been mistaken, may it please Him to prevent my error from being hurtful to your faith ! . . . But what have you still on your mind ? you appear uneasy.

Samuel—Yes: what you have said on the education of the child consecrated by God, has laid strong hold of my mind. . . . I ask myself, if, in reality, this principle can have much influence on the child?

Father—Very well! I would ask of you, according to what principle the infant Jesus was brought up, if not that of love, seeing God was His Father? I know that there was no place in Him either for ignorance or sin; and that He was always guided in His heart by this principle, that He belonged to God “and ought to do the will of His Father.” This is what He felt, and you perceive, not for the first time, at twelve years of age (Luke ii. 49).

Samuel—The child Jesus, you have said, was brought up and conducted Himself according to this principle of love and consecration to God! Yes, that is certain. . . . Why, then, should I, a Christian father, refuse to my child, that which the infant Jesus Himself has done—and for my infant, as Irenæus says. Or again, why should I question the efficacy of a means, which God Himself appointed, when He commanded parents to “bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” viz., in the grace which is in Jesus (Eph. vi. 4).

Father—I am the father of a large family, dear Samuel, and could give you many touching proofs of the truth and blessed efficacy of this principle; but, imposing silence on myself as regards my own children, I shall end by citing an anecdote, to the authenticity of which I certify, and which, I am sure, will interest you.

One of the masters of a public school, having understood by the Word of God, to which his heart was in subjection, that such ought to be the principle of a Christian education, had explained it to his pupils, into

whose minds he inculcated it by all the instructions and examples that were suitable to their ages. This method, which was unknown to most of the families of his pupils, had to encounter obstacles and opposition, but the master was not discouraged, persuaded as he was, that God would bless that which was according to His Word; and his expectations were not in vain. Several happy results appeared in the conduct of the children, and amongst others the following, which was very different from what it would have been according to an ordinary education.

One of the pupils committed a theft in the school, and the fact, positively proved, was known to the entire class. The culprit had to expect a severe chastisement, and it may be, that he was inclined to be proud and hardened. But the Christian master, giving glory in his heart to the Word of God, called the guilty pupil before him, and, in the presence of his school-fellows, who remained standing, and in silence, read to him what God, in the Bible, says of theft and those who commit it; then, after having pointed out to him its guilt and disgracefulness, he said: What, my child, is your Christian name? Francis, replied the pupil. When was that name given to you? demanded the master. At my baptism, said the pupil. And what other name was then invoked upon you? replied the master. That of the eternal God, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, answered the boy, blushing and bowing his head. That is to say, my child, continued the master, that according to the mercy and commandment of God, you were, in your infancy, thus consecrated by His great name? Yes, sir, said the culprit, with much embarrassment. And do you think, pursued the master, with solemnity, that you were thus sealed with the holy name of God that you might now

walk in iniquity, or was it your intention, in committing this theft, to deny your God and to efface His name from upon you ?

After this question, the master, that he might leave to Divine truth all its power and authority, kept silence. The school was motionless, and each pupil reflected on what he had just heard, and in which he himself was also more or less described. But as to the culprit, he testified to the power of the truth, for, raising his head, he burst into tears, and ran and threw himself on the neck of his pious teacher, saying to him, in the midst of his sobs, that he was distressed at having done this wickedness, that he was grieved for it in the sight of God, that he expected pardon from the goodness of the Lord, and sincerely hoped that, during his life, he would never more be permitted to committ such an act.

Samuel—How I thank you, my dear brother, for having related to me this touching story ! What a contrast between such a scene and that which would have taken place, on a like occasion, in a school conducted according to the principle of worldly honour, or of the fear of punishment.

Father—Not, however, that chastisement is to be excluded from an education conducted on the principle of grace ; but then, even when it is inflicted, it is in behalf of a holy and just God, who thus visits *His* child (Ezek. xvi., 20, 21), that this consecrated child may be rendered better. The child then says, “It is *my* Lord, it is *my* God, that reproves me ;” and rebellion flies far away from his heart.

Samuel—I comprehend it entirely, and I thank God for it. Yes, I see that the child of believing parents, having thus upon him the seal of the covenant of promise,

the great name of the Almighty, who is his God, as He is the God of his father and mother, accustoms himself to reverence the Lord with whom he maintains this relation of grace, and that whilst he respects himself as a consecrated vessel, he willingly receives the paternal law that the Lord lays upon him. This, my good friend, is what that daughter of yours, who received me this morning, has shown me. "Mamma," said she, "has made me understand that in the sight of God I am as a golden cup, marked with His name, and that it is not with a precious vase that we should think of drawing dirty water."

Father—Ah! that God would honour more and more His Word and ordinances in the midst of my dear ones! Yes, *let me and my house serve Him*, since by His grace He is our God! that so, all my children, growing according to His promise (Psalm cxxviii.) "like olive plants round about my table," may remember that they ought to flee from the evil and adhere to the good, because they are a BAPTIZED FAMILY.

NOTES.

NOTE A, PAGES 23, 24.

"In the kingdom of grace man accepts nothing."

The idea which Dr. Malan intends to express by these words, is quite correct and Scriptural; but the terms in which he expresses it are liable to be misunderstood. An intelligent reader would be apt to object—"Surely a sinner, in believing on Christ, does *accept* God's terms of salvation,—does *accept* or *embrace* Christ as freely offered to him in the Gospel."* Dr. Malan would probably answer—"True; but what I say is, that *in the kingdom of grace* man accepts nothing:—now, a man is not *in the kingdom of grace* till he has accepted Christ as his Saviour:—that acceptance is the act that *brings him into the kingdom of grace*. Once in, he has nothing to do with *choosing or accepting*; he simply *receives* what God, in the exercise of His Sovereignty, freely bestows. It is plain from this that Dr. Malan intends a very marked distinction between "accepting" and "receiving." He regards "accept" as implying the possibility of *rejecting or negotiating*, and thinks, very properly, that, in the case of benefits bestowed on those who are in the kingdom of grace, such a thing is not conceivable. But though this general position is correct enough, it was not necessary to Dr. Malan's argument; and as it is a little abstruse and subtle, it would have been as well he had omitted it. For even if the position "in the kingdom of grace man accepts nothing"—were proved not to be universally true, all that the argument here requires would still be true,—viz., that Baptism is a seal impressed by God on those who are in covenant with Him, whether born in that relationship, as the children of believers, or newly received into it, as converted pagans or infidels on their believing the Gospel.

NOTE B, PAGES 33, 36.

"It was not by faith that the Saviour lived."

Here again Dr. Malan's mode of expressing himself exposes him to misconstruction. His meaning obviously is that "faith" in the sense of *reliance on the merits of another for the pardon of sin*, cannot be ascribed to Christ, inasmuch as He had no sin, and had infinite merit of His own; and this is quite true. But why thus limit the *meaning* of the term "faith" to one of its applications? Faith, in the more general sense of *confidence in the truth of all God's promises and in His power to fulfil them* (Rom. iv. 18—25), is uniformly ascribed to Christ by both Old and New Testament writers; and of this, as of every other spiritual grace, He presents to us a glorious and perfect example.

* Shorter Catechism, Q. 31.

